

## 2077.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Understanding the Increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Counts, 2006-2011

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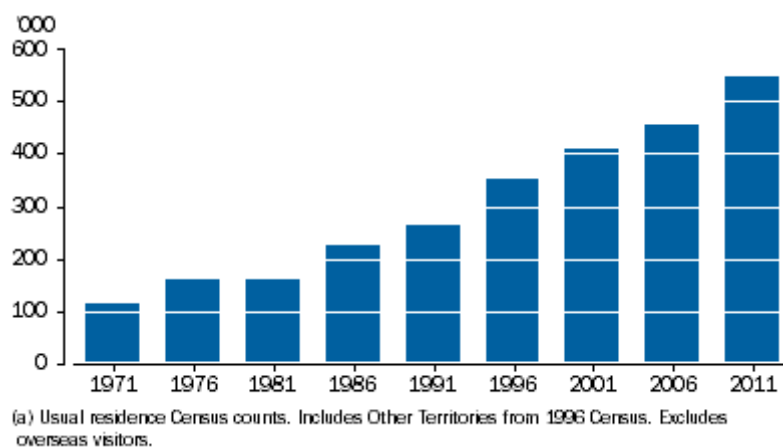
## Introduction

## INTRODUCTION

Since the 1971 Australian Census of Population and Housing, there has been a clear upward trend in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in each successive Census. A very large increase occurred between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses (33%), and again between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses (21%). Factors contributing to the increase observed in 1996 were discussed in depth in Occasional Paper: Population Issues, Indigenous Australians, 1996 (cat. no. 4708.0). The purpose of this paper is to discuss factors contributing to the increase observed in 2011.

There were 548,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the 2011 Census. This represented a 21% (93,300) increase since the 2006 Census - almost double the rate of increase between the 2001 and 2006 Censuses (11% or 45,000).

### CENSUS COUNTS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(a)



The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census counts and population estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are based on responses to the ABS standard question for Indigenous status which is used in self-enumerated and interviewer-assisted collections. The same question has been used to determine a person's Indigenous status since the 1981 Census. People have had an option to identify as being of both Aboriginal **and** Torres Strait Islander origin since the 1996 Census.

While Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been increasing since 1971, large increases such as those seen between 1991-1996 and 2006-2011 have a greater impact upon other statistics, such as population measures or performance indicators used for government reporting.

While ultimately it is not possible to fully explain the change in the Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011, it is important to understand the factors that may have contributed to the increase. This publication:

- quantifies the components of change that can be measured (such as births, deaths and migration)
- explores possible reasons for the remainder of the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, such as improved coverage in the 2011 Census and changes in people's propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin
- provides information on the number of people in the Census for whom Indigenous

status was unknown.

To help understand how much of the increase in the count may be due to people identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the 2011 Census but not in the 2006 Census, and how increases in the count may have affected population and performance measures, this publication also provides information on changes in selected characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011, including:

- age and sex structure
- family dynamics
- population distribution
- labour force status
- educational attainment.

## KEY FINDINGS

The key findings from this analysis are as follows.

- Over two-thirds (70% or 65,500 people) of the total increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people (93,300) between 2006 and 2011 can be accounted for by demographic factors of population change (that is, births, deaths and overseas migration). This means that 30% (27,800 people) of the total increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people cannot be explained by demographic factors.
- There were 67,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years in the 2011 Census, which is the highest Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of this age group in any Census.
- Fertility rates remained relatively constant from 2006 to 2011 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women.
- Of the 27,800 increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people that cannot be explained by demographic factors, 9,400 was attributable to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-9 years in 2011. Half of these children (4,700) had one parent of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin and one non-Indigenous parent (mixed parentage).
- The vast majority (90% or 83,100) of the 93,300 increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 occurred in non-remote areas. Of this, just over two-thirds (67% or 62,400) of the increase was in New South Wales and Queensland.
- A change in people's propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin is found to be a significant contributor to the increase in counts of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people which cannot be attributed to measurable demographic factors. In particular, the large increase in the count of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-14 years in 2011 has been driven by a greater propensity of their parents to identify themselves and their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census when compared to the 2006 Census.
- Analysis of the change in the Census undercount between 2006 and 2011 indicates it is unlikely that this was a significant factor in the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the 2011 Census.

This publication brings together data from the 2006 and 2011 Censuses to describe and start to explain the large increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. Further analysis is expected to be undertaken in the future to investigate some of the key contributors to this change in more detail. A new data source for analysing changes in the characteristics of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples between Censuses will be the Statistical Longitudinal Census Dataset (SLCD). The SLCD is due to be released in December 2013 and will comprise a random sample of 5% of person records from the 2006 Census linked to the corresponding records in the 2011 Census and beyond. This utilises a statistical method known as probabilistic record linkage based on a number of characteristics common to both datasets such as age, sex, geographic region and country of birth (but not name and address which is destroyed after statistical processing has been completed in 2006). It is expected that about 2% (22,000) of these records will be for Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

## **DATA QUALITY**

The ABS aims to produce high quality data from the Census and extensive efforts are invested in form design, collection procedures and processing. This restricts, but does not eliminate, the potential for error due to partial or non-response, respondent or processing error, and undercount. In this publication, adjustments have not been made for undercount or potential data quality issues, and the ABS advises that caution should be used when considering results, particularly where analysis focuses on small area or small population data. For more information on Census data quality, refer to the 2011 Census of Population and Housing Quality Declaration.

# **Changes in age and sex structure**

## **CHANGES IN AGE AND SEX STRUCTURE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents information about changes in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 by age and sex and by sex ratios (number of males per 100 females).

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- Nationally, for both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females, large increases in Census counts were observed for all five-year age groups less than 65 years in 2011, with the exception of those aged 20-24 years.
- The pattern of increase by age group in the states and territories generally followed the national trend, with the exception of the Northern Territory which showed a decrease in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in most age groups.
- The sex ratios for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20 years and over in 2011, and particularly for those aged 20-24 years and 25-29 years in 2011, were generally lower than the trend for the total population.

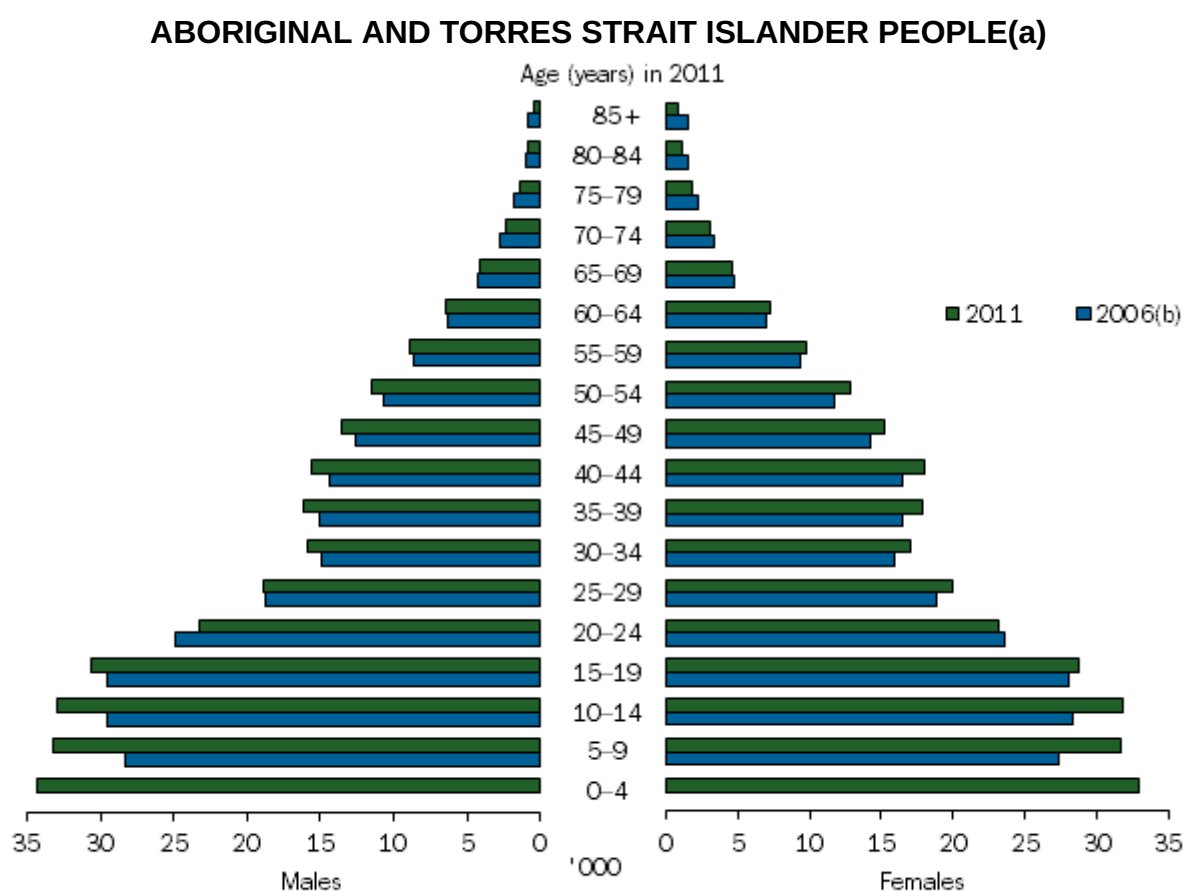
### **AGE COHORTS**

An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for

example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 who were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Age cohorts are used to look at a chosen group of people at points in time to assess whether changes to the group are in line with expectations. In theory, each age cohort in a demographically closed population will show fewer and fewer people in each successive Census as the population ages. This means that the population counts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in each age cohort in the 2011 Census, except for children aged 0-4 years, should be lower than in the 2006 Census. For example, the 2011 Census count of people aged 30-34 years should be less than the count of those aged 25-29 years in 2006, and this count should be less than the count of those aged 20-24 years in 2001.

An age cohort which has more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census than the 2006 Census can indicate an undercount for that cohort in the 2006 Census and/or more people entering into that age cohort in 2011. This can occur through migration, which generally does not apply to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at the national level. For more information on migration, refer to the chapter Measuring Changes in Population between Censuses. It can also occur through other means, such as improved Census coverage and/or people identifying as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person in 2011 but not in 2006.

In 2011, there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in almost every five-year age cohort under the age of 65 years than in 2006. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males and females aged 20-24 years in 2011 were the only age cohorts in this range to record a decrease in counts.



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 60-64 years in 2011 is 55-59 years in 2006).

Of the 93,300 increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in

the 2011 Census, most (72% or 67,400) were aged 0-4 years. The next largest proportional increases were for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander boys and girls aged 5-9 years (17% or 4,900 for boys and 16% or 4,400 for girls) and 10-14 years (11% or 3,300 for boys and 12% or 3,400 for girls) in 2011. Large increases were also observed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males in age groups from 30-54 years (5,200 or 8%) and females in age groups from 25-54 years (7,100 or 8%) in 2011.

### **Age cohorts by states and territories**

In each of the states and territories, the increase in the Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by age group generally followed the national trend. Children and youth aged 0-14 years in 2011 accounted for the majority of the increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011 in all states and territories.

Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over in 2011, the highest increases in counts across most of the states and territories were for children and youth aged 5-14 years in 2011 (that is, children aged 0-9 years in 2006). The Northern Territory showed an increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-9 years in 2011, with a decrease in 10-14 year olds. Counts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 60 years and over were lower than 2006 for all states and territories, which was in line with mortality expectations.

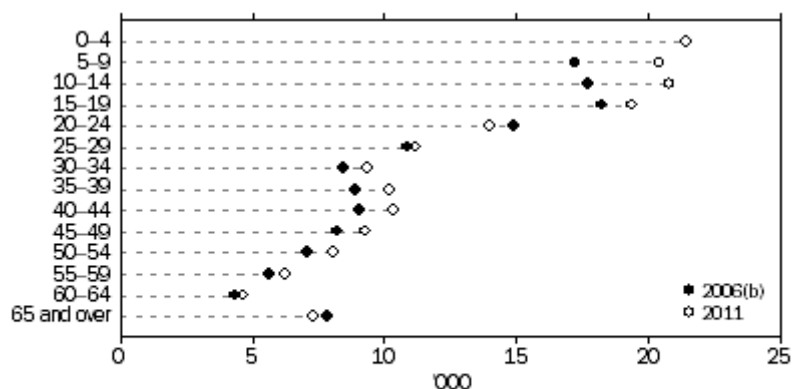
Most states and territories showed a decline in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years in 2011, except for Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory which registered small percentage increases (2% and 11% respectively). As young adults are increasingly mobile, the increases in counts in Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory could reflect interstate mobility in part due to employment or higher education opportunities.

Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, the highest percentage increases between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses were for those in age groups from 30-49 years. These increases occurred across all states and territories. This indicates the possibility of an undercount of people in these age cohorts in the 2006 Census or an increase in the number of people who identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the 2011 Census.

### ***New South Wales***

New South Wales recorded the largest count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011 and also recorded the largest increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011. This increase was largely accounted for by children and youth aged 0-14 years in 2011 (81% or 27,700 of the total increase). Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, those in the age groups from 35-54 years in 2011 accounted for the highest proportion of the overall increase in New South Wales (14% or 4,700).

### **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN NEW SOUTH WALES(a), by age cohort in 2011**

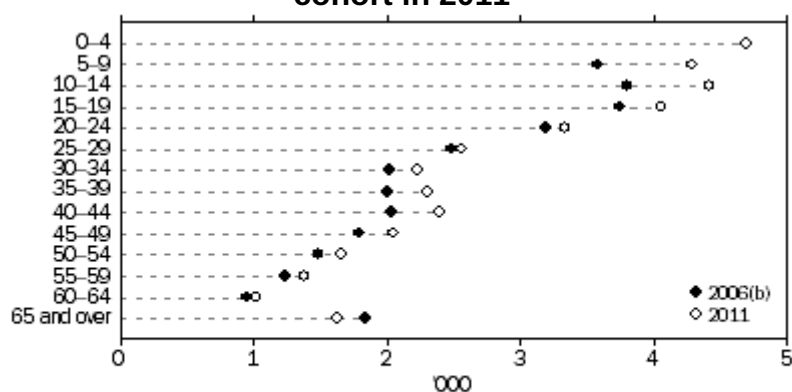


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

## Victoria

Between 2006 and 2011, there were consistent increases in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Victoria in all five-year age groups up to 65 years and over, including those aged 20-24 years in 2011 (2% or 150). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011 accounted for a larger proportion of the total increase in Victoria (24% or 1,800) than in the other states and territories. This could reflect an undercount in the 2006 Census or a higher propensity among people in these age groups to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the 2011 Census. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in age groups from 30-49 years together contributed 14% (1,100) of the overall increase in Victoria.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN VICTORIA(a), by age cohort in 2011

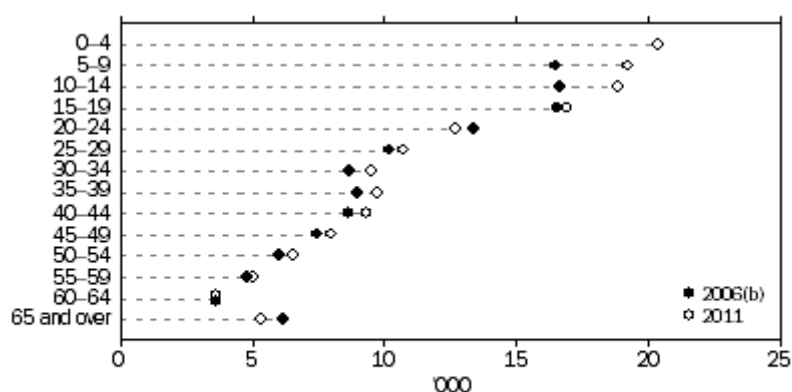


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

## Queensland

Queensland recorded the second largest count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011, after New South Wales, and also recorded the second highest increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011. The largest contributors to the total increase were children and youth aged 0-14 years in 2011 (90% or 25,400). Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, small increases were observed for all age groups, apart from those aged 20-24 years and 65 years and over. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years in 2011 both accounted for 3% (800) of the overall increase.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN QUEENSLAND(a), by age cohort in 2011

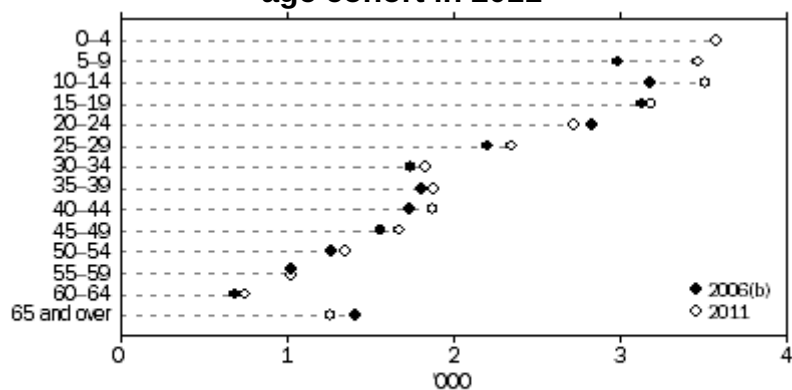


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### South Australia

Children and youth aged 0-14 years in 2011 accounted for the majority of the total increase (90% or 4,400) in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in South Australia between 2006 and 2011. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, those aged 25-29 years and 40-44 years accounted for the highest proportions of the overall increase (3% or 140 each).

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA(a), by age cohort in 2011



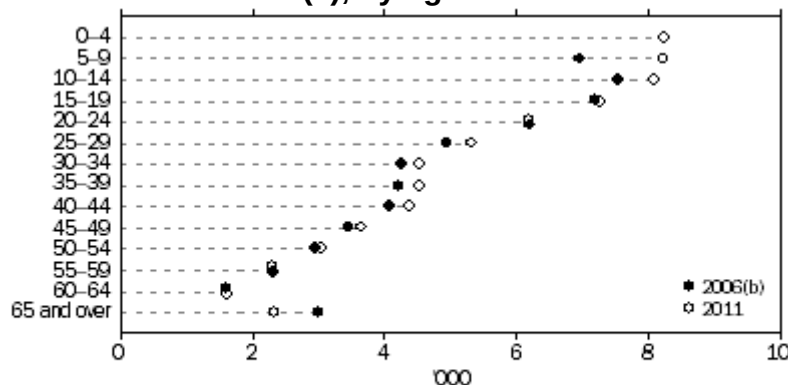
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Western Australia

Western Australia followed the national pattern of change in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011, with the majority of the total increase contributed by children and youth aged 0-14 years in 2011. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, small increases were observed for all age groups, apart from those aged 20-24 years and 55 years and over. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-44 years in 2011 together accounted for the largest share of the overall increase in Western Australia (12% or 1,300).



## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN WESTERN AUSTRALIA(a), by age cohort in 2011



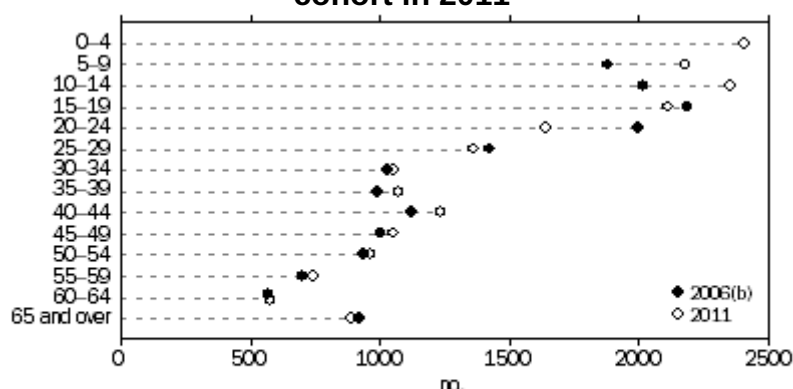
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Tasmania

Tasmania recorded one of the smallest counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in both 2006 and 2011. For this reason, percentage increases or decreases in each five-year age group could magnify small changes in the actual counts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses.

In line with the national trend, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years in 2011 accounted for the majority (84% or 2,400) of the total increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Tasmania between 2006 and 2011. Notably, among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011, those in age groups from 35-49 years together accounted for a further 9% (250) of the overall increase. Like the Northern Territory, Tasmania also showed a decrease in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-19 years in 2011 (down 3% or 80).

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN TASMANIA(a), by age cohort in 2011



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

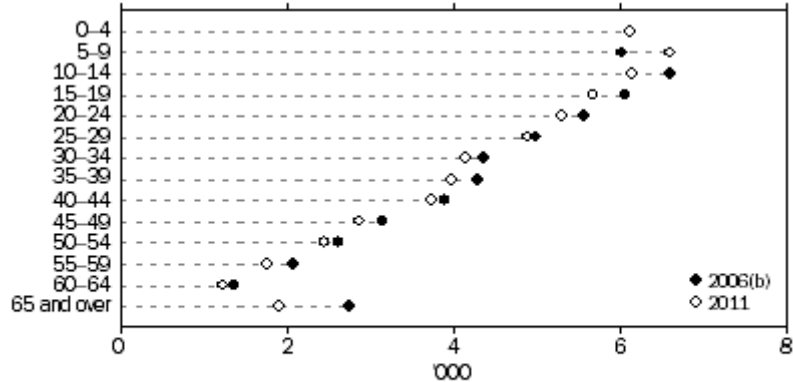
### Northern Territory

The Northern Territory was the only jurisdiction in which there were consistent decreases between 2006 and 2011 in the Census counts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all five-year age groups from 10 years and over in 2011. Aboriginal and Torres

Strait Islander children aged 0-9 years in 2011 accounted for the entire increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory.

Notably, as discussed in the chapter Measuring Changes in Population between Censuses, the Northern Territory experienced a net decrease of 26% (790) due to interstate mobility, the highest proportion of change of all the states and territories. While the counts presented here have not been adjusted for mobility, this suggests that mobility was likely to be a contributing factor to the decreases in counts for most age groups between 2006 and 2011.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN THE NORTHERN TERRITORY(a), by age cohort in 2011**

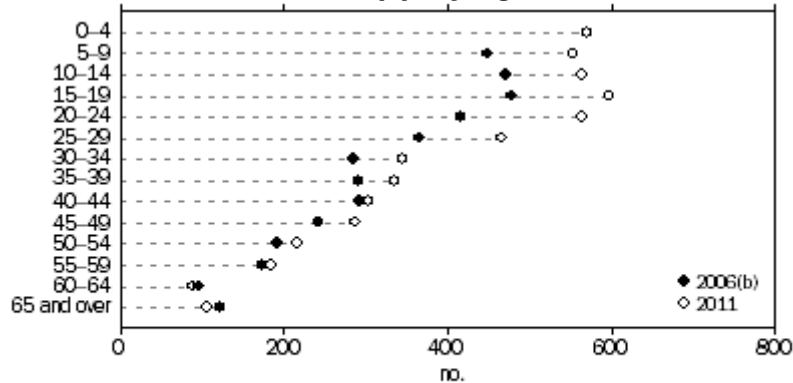


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

**Australian Capital Territory**

Due to the small count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Australian Capital Territory, the increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over between 2006 and 2011 was very small for most five-year age groups. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in age groups under 35 years in 2011 accounted for 91% (1,200) of the total increase. Notably, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-34 years accounted for nearly one-quarter (24% or 310) of the overall increase between 2006 and 2011.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE IN THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY(a), by age cohort in 2011**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

**SEX RATIOS**

A sex ratio provides the number of males per 100 females in a population or sub-population. Generally speaking, at birth the expected sex ratio for the total Australian population is approximately 105 males per 100 females (or 105.0). This rate usually declines to a point of parity (100 males per 100 females) for people aged 30-64 years, due to higher mortality rates at younger ages for males than for females. For those aged 65 years and over, the sex ratio usually reduces rapidly to less than 100 males per 100 females, again due to the impact of higher male mortality in these age groups.

Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years in 2011 exhibited a much lower than expected sex ratio (99.9) when compared with the same age cohort five years earlier (105.4). A similar decrease was also apparent for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-29 years in 2011 (94.7 in 2011 compared with 99.1 in 2006). While this could be a result of a higher mortality rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males than females in these age groups, it also suggests that fewer than expected young males were counted in the 2011 Census and/or the count of young females was higher than expected. This could be due to changes in the propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the Census, or changes in the undercount of young males and females in these age groups. For more information on estimates of the net undercount in 2011, refer to Census of Population and Housing - Details of Undercount, 2011 (cat. no. 2940.0).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the age groups 30-34 years through to 60-64 years in 2011 also had lower than expected sex ratios when compared with national trends. However, the rates are similar to those in the 2006 Census, so may be more in line with expectations for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mortality rates.

#### **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Sex ratios(b) by age cohort in 2011(c)**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<i>Age in 2011 (years)</i>	<i>ratio</i>	<i>ratio</i>	<i>% points</i>
0-4	..	104.0	..
5-9	103.4	104.5	1.1
10-14	104.5	103.8	-0.7
15-19	105.1	106.6	1.5
20-24	105.3	99.9	-5.4
25-29	99.1	94.7	-4.4
30-34	93.9	92.7	-1.2
35-39	91.0	91.0	0.0
40-44	87.4	86.2	-1.2
45-49	88.6	89.7	1.1
50-54	90.3	90.2	-0.1
55-59	91.8	91.1	-0.7
60-64	90.0	88.4	-1.6
65-69	89.0	87.5	-1.5
70-74	81.5	78.0	-3.5
75-79	76.1	73.6	-2.5
80-84	68.4	61.7	-6.7
85 and over	58.0	53.3	-4.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>97.0</b>	<b>97.2</b>	<b>0.2</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Number of males per 100 females.

(c) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

In 2011, there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in almost every five-year age cohort under the age of 65 years than in 2006. The majority (72% or 67,400) of the increase in the Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was contributed by children aged 0-4 years in 2011. There were also large increases in counts of children and youth aged 5-14 years in 2011, males aged 30-54 years in 2011 and females aged 25-54 years in 2011. One explanation for the increases among these age cohorts is that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents identified themselves and their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census but not in the 2006 Census. This is discussed in more detail in the chapter, Changing Propensity to Identify as Being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin between Censuses.

# **Measuring changes in population between Censuses**

## **MEASURING CHANGES IN POPULATION BETWEEN CENSUSES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

When an unexpectedly large increase is observed in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between Censuses, such as that observed between the 1991 and 1996 Censuses (33%) and between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses (21%), some of the increase can be explained through demographic factors of population change such as births, deaths and migration. These are the components of change that can be measured using information collected in the Census of Population and Housing and in administrative datasets.

This chapter explores the demographic factors which account for part of the increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses.

Note that Census data is not adjusted for undercount and so relates to Census counts, not population estimates. For this reason, the analysis in this chapter is repeated using population estimates in Technical Note 1: Measuring Change in Population Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- Over two-thirds (65,500) of the 93,300 increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 can be accounted for by demographic factors of population change (that is, births, deaths and overseas migration).
- The remaining one-third (27,800) of the increase that cannot be explained by demographic factors equates to 5% of the total 2011 Census count of Aboriginal and

Torres Strait Islander people.

## FRAMEWORK FOR MEASURING CHANGE

In order to measure the change in Census counts between 2006 and 2011, the net effects of births, deaths and overseas migration are added (or subtracted) to the 2006 Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to produce an expected 2011 count. If it were possible to achieve complete coverage in Census enumeration, and consistency in the reporting and recording of each person's Indigenous status, change in Census counts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses would be entirely attributable to births, deaths and migration combined - that is, the expected count for 2011 would match the actual Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011. In reality there will always be an element of the total change in counts between Censuses that cannot be explained, such as the change that occurs as a result of individuals identifying as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in one Census but not in another, as well as errors in the measurement of births, deaths and migration. This can be represented as:

$\begin{aligned} &\text{Census count 1} \\ &+ \text{births registered between Census 1 and Census 2} \\ &- \text{deaths registered between Census 1 and Census 2} \\ &+/- \text{net migration between Census 1 and Census 2} \\ &+/- \text{the impact of factors which cannot be explained by measurable components} \\ &\quad \text{of population change} \\ &= \text{Census count 2} \end{aligned}$
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Despite the best efforts of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to collect a complete set of information from all people in Australia on Census night, there will always be some people for whom Indigenous status is not reported. In the 2011 Census, there were 1,058,600 records where Indigenous status was unknown. While some people with an unknown Indigenous status will be of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and some will be non-Indigenous people, the exact proportions cannot be determined from Census data. This complicates analysis of Census counts, given that missing Indigenous status is not imputed in the Census, but is instead imputed following the Post Enumeration Survey for use in producing population estimates. For this reason, the analysis presented in this chapter is based on the 548,400 people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011.

## COMPONENTS OF CHANGE IN CENSUS COUNTS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

### Births and deaths

Birth and death registrations are important components of many demographic estimates, such as population estimates and calculations of life expectancy at birth. The ABS and the state and territory Registrars of Births, Deaths and Marriages are committed to improving the identification of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and also the completeness and accuracy of the recording of Indigenous status on birth and death registration forms. However, some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not correctly identified or recorded as such when their birth or death is registered.

It is generally assumed that the number of registered births and deaths understates the level of fertility and mortality in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population and so projected births would normally be used in this analysis, given they take into account this under-identification. However, between 2006 and 2011, the number of registered births exceeded the number of projected births in some jurisdictions. This increase in births registrations is consistent with the increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For this reason, births and deaths registrations rather than projections have been used.

At the national level, over two-thirds (69%) of the increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 can be attributed to natural increase (births minus deaths). The combined contribution of births (increase) and deaths (decrease) explains more of the overall increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in some jurisdictions than in others. In the Australian Capital Territory, just under half (47%) of the overall increase can be attributed to natural increase, while in Western Australia natural increase accounted for most (85%) of the increase. In contrast, natural increase was greater than the overall increase in Census counts for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory, with other factors, such as interstate migration, having contributed an offsetting effect.

### CHANGE DUE TO BIRTHS AND DEATHS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(a), 2006-2011

	Census count		Relative change		Births(b)	Deaths(b)	Change due to births and deaths(c)	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		2006-2011	2006-2011	2006-2011	
	no.	no.	no.	%	no.	no.	no.	%
New South Wales	138 506	172 622	34 116	24.6	21 015	2 959	18 056	52.9
Victoria	30 143	37 991	7 848	26.0	5 183	554	4 629	59.0
Queensland	127 580	155 826	28 246	22.1	23 673	3 313	20 360	72.1
South Australia	25 556	30 433	4 877	19.1	4 449	717	3 732	76.5
Western Australia	58 710	69 666	10 956	18.7	11 570	2 214	9 356	85.4
Tasmania	16 768	19 627	2 859	17.1	1 949	139	1 810	63.3
Northern Territory	53 663	56 777	3 114	5.8	7 846	2 264	5 582	179.3
Australian Capital Territory	3 873	5 185	1 312	33.9	673	55	618	47.1
<b>Australia</b>	<b>455 028</b>	<b>548 370</b>	<b>93 342</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>76 378</b>	<b>12 218</b>	<b>64 160</b>	<b>68.7</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Registered births and deaths.

(c) Registered births minus registered deaths.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

### Overseas migration

Information on overseas migration is collected in the Census, in response to the question "What was your place of usual residence five years ago?". People who answer this question by stating they were overseas are assumed to have migrated to Australia after the last Census and before the current Census.

Overseas migration figures from the Census show that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who migrated to, or returned to, Australia between 2006 and 2011 accounted for 1.5% (1,400) of the increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people during this period.

Other sources of overseas migration such as arrival and departure cards do not collect the Indigenous status of individuals and as such cannot be used as an accurate source of the overseas migration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

## Interstate migration

Within Australia, migration between the states and territories provides important insight into population changes at the jurisdictional level. Information on internal migration is collected in the Census, in response to the question "What was your place of usual residence five years ago?".

Queensland, Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and the Australian Capital Territory recorded a net gain in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander residents from interstate migration between 2006 and 2011, meaning the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who moved into those jurisdictions was higher than the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who moved out of them. Over the same period, New South Wales, the Northern Territory and Tasmania experienced net loss from interstate migration. Although the net loss was highest in New South Wales (2,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people), as a proportion of the change in Census counts it was highest in the Northern Territory (26%). This net loss equates to 1.5% of the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory in 2006.

Data on interstate migration are not adjusted for Census undercount so it is likely these figures underestimate the number of 'movers in' and 'movers out' for all states and territories to varying degrees.

### CHANGE DUE TO INTERSTATE MIGRATION, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(a), 2006-2011

	Census count		Relative change		Movers in (b)	Movers out(c)	Change due to interstate migration (d)	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		2006-2011	2006-2011	2006-2011	
	no.	no.	no.	%	no.	no.	no.	%
New South Wales	138 506	172 622	34 116	24.6	4 592	6 588	-1 996	-5.9
Victoria	30 143	37 991	7 848	26.0	2 892	2 059	833	10.6
Queensland	127 580	155 826	28 246	22.1	6 434	5 222	1 212	4.3
South Australia	25 556	30 433	4 877	19.1	1 616	1 290	326	6.7
Western Australia	58 710	69 666	10 956	18.7	2 235	1 941	294	2.7
Tasmania	16 768	19 627	2 859	17.1	777	828	-51	-1.8
Northern Territory	53 663	56 777	3 114	5.8	1 831	2 624	-793	-25.5
Australian Capital Territory	3 873	5 185	1 312	33.9	932	782	150	11.4
<b>Australia</b>	<b>455 028</b>	<b>548 370</b>	<b>93 342</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>0.0</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) People who migrated into that state/territory from another state/territory.

(c) People who migrated out of that state/territory to another state/territory.

(d) Movers in minus movers out.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to

## ERROR OF CLOSURE - CENSUS COUNTS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

Over two-thirds (65,500) of the 93,300 person increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 can be accounted for by births, deaths and overseas migration. This leaves just over one-third (27,800) of the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2011 that cannot be explained by the standard demographic components of population change. This unexplained component of the Census increase is referred to as the 'error of closure'.

'Error of closure' is a demographic term for the difference between the observed Census count and the expected Census count based on the previous count and changes due to demographic factors during the period between the Censuses. The term 'error of closure' does not imply a mistake, imprecision, or data quality issues, but is a term commonly used by demographers to denote differences between two population counts that cannot be explained by the demographic factors of population change.

The error of closure represents population change that may be explained by factors such as changing fertility rates, patterns of inter-partnering, and changes in the propensity of people to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin between Censuses. These factors are explored in Changing Propensity to Identify as Being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin between Censuses. The error of closure is expressed as a percentage of the 2011 Census count, and represents 5% of the total 2011 Census count for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

The error of closure rate varied by state and territory, with rates higher than the national rate observed in the Australian Capital Territory (10%), New South Wales (10%) and Victoria (6%).

### ERROR OF CLOSURE IN CENSUS COUNTS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(a), 2006-2011

	Census count		Relative change		Measurable change 2006-2011					Error of closure(b)	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		Natural increase(c)	Overseas migration	Interstate migration	Total		no.	% (d)
	no.	no.	no.	%	no.	no.	no.	no.	%		
New South Wales	138 506	172 622	34 116	24.6	18 056	411	-1 996	16 471	48.3	17 645	10.2
Victoria	30 143	37 991	7 848	26.0	4 629	174	833	5 636	71.8	2 212	5.8
Queensland	127 580	155 826	28 246	22.1	20 360	435	1 212	22 007	77.9	6 239	4.0
South Australia	25 556	30 433	4 877	19.1	3 732	57	326	4 115	84.4	762	2.5
Western Australia	58 710	69 666	10 956	18.7	9 356	172	294	9 822	89.6	1 134	1.6
Tasmania	16 768	19 627	2 859	17.1	1 810	37	- 51	1 796	62.8	1 063	5.4
Northern Territory	53 663	56 777	3 114	5.8	5 582	44	-793	4 833	155.2	-1 719	-3.0
Australian Capital Territory	3 873	5 185	1 312	33.9	618	45	150	813	62.0	499	9.6
<b>Australia</b>	<b>455 028</b>	<b>548 370</b>	<b>93 342</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>64 160</b>	<b>1 375</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>65 535</b>	<b>70.2</b>	<b>27 807</b>	<b>5.1</b>



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Total population change minus total measurable change.

(c) Registered births minus registered deaths.

(d) Proportion of the total count for each jurisdiction.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

The 3,100 increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory between 2006 and 2011 was lower than expected. The increase attributable to natural increase in the Northern Territory (5,600) was considerably higher than the overall increase in its Census count. This indicates that some parents may have identified their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in birth registrations but not in the 2011 Census, or have moved interstate after their child's birth was registered. It may also mean that some Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who have moved out of the Northern Territory since 2006 have not recorded their previous address in the 2011 Census.

The Northern Territory also recorded an increase between 2006 and 2011 in the number of returned Census forms with no response to the Indigenous status question, while the number of 'not stated' responses decreased in all other states and the territories. It is reasonable to assume that some of these records were for people of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people origin, so this increase in 'not stated' responses is considered to have contributed to the lower than expected increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the Northern Territory. For more information about people with an unknown Indigenous status in the Census, refer to Technical Note 2: People for Whom Indigenous Status is Unknown.

## **CENSUS ENUMERATION AND PROCESSING**

Improvements in Census enumeration and processing are also potential contributors to change in Census counts, but these are factors which are not easily measured.

After each Census, there is an extensive review of procedures that results in improvements for the next Census. As a result of the evaluation following the 2006 Census, additional funding was provided to the ABS to improve the procedures specifically focused on counting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census.

Operational improvements in the 2011 Census included an increase in staffing resources, a reduction in the size of Census collector workloads, and an increased focus on urban areas. To support these improvements there was an increased level of engagement with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people prior to the 2011 Census. For more detailed information on the improvements to the procedures for counting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census, refer to Information Paper: 2011 Census Special Enumeration Strategies (cat. no. 2911.0.55.004). While the impacts of operational changes are not easy to measure within Census data, these improved procedures were expected to result in higher data quality and better coverage of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census.

During the processing of Census data, a series of edits are applied to remove inconsistencies and errors. In 2008, due to funding constraints, the ABS made the decision to leave Census editing procedures largely unchanged between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. As a result, it is expected that any minor change in editing procedures between 2006 and 2011 has had little impact on the change in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Census counts.

## **Indigenous Status not stated**

In 2011, the number of Census records with an unknown Indigenous status was 1,058,600 (5% of the total count) compared with 1,133,400 (6% of the total count) in 2006. The difference of 74,800 records represents a 7% decrease in records with an unknown Indigenous status between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. This means that more people had their Indigenous status recorded in 2011 than in 2006, and may account for some of the unexplained increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011. For more information about people with an unknown Indigenous status in the Census, refer to Technical Note 2: People for Whom Indigenous Status is Unknown.

# **Changing propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin between Censuses**

## **CHANGING PROPENSITY TO IDENTIFY AS BEING OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER ORIGIN BETWEEN CENSUSES**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The 93,300 increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses was larger than can be fully accounted for by demographic factors (natural increase and migration). For further information about the increases resulting from demographic factors, refer to the chapter Measuring Changes in Population between Censuses.

There are other factors that help explain the part of the increase which cannot be accounted for by demographic factors. These include:

- improved coverage in the 2011 Census, resulting in some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were missed in the 2006 Census being counted in the 2011 Census (this is explored further in Technical Note 1: Measuring Change in Population Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples)
- a decrease in the number of Census records with an unknown Indigenous status between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, meaning that more people had their Indigenous status recorded in 2011 than in 2006, some of whom would have been of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin (this is explored further in Technical Note 2: People for Whom Indigenous Status is Unknown, and
- an increased propensity for people to identify themselves and their young children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census.

This chapter explores the final point, an increased propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, by focusing on the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for the three age cohorts which experienced the largest increases between 2006 and 2011 (0-4 years, 5-14 years and 20-54 years in 2011).

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- In 2011, 10,500 more people aged 20-54 years identified themselves as being of

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin than people aged 15-49 years in 2006. Many of these people would have been parents.

- As Census forms are usually completed by a parent on behalf of children, the increase in the count of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged less than 15 years is linked to the increased count of parents who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 but not in 2006.
- Analysis of age cohort data indicates that a person's propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin tends to vary across life stages.

## **CHANGES IN INDIGENOUS STATUS OF CHILDREN**

### **Children aged 0-4 years**

The 2011 Census counted 67,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years, which was an increase of 11,800 from the 2006 Census which counted 55,600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years.

An examination of the fertility rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) found no significant change in the fertility levels between the periods 2001-2006 and 2006-2011. For further information about this analysis, refer to Technical Note 3: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Fertility Rates.

Census forms are usually completed by a parent on behalf of children aged less than 15 years. This means that the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years that was far greater than that expected was the result of increasing numbers of parents identifying their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census.

### **Children aged 5-14 years**

The 2011 Census also counted 16,200 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-14 years than Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-9 years in the 2006 Census. Any changes to the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in this age group would be expected to come from deaths and overseas migration. While improved coverage in the 2011 Census is likely to have contributed to some of the increase, a key contributor is likely to be parents identifying these children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census but not in the 2006 Census.

### **Children with mixed parentage**

The ABS looked at the extent to which the increase in the count of children identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin could be attributed to an increase in the count of children with mixed parentage.

For the purposes of this statistical analysis, mixed couples are opposite-sex couples where one person is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin and the other is a non-Indigenous person. Mixed couples as a proportion of all Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander couples (where at least one person is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin) increased from 71% in 2006 to 74% in 2011.

The count of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-9 years in 2011 was 9,400 greater than the count of those aged 0-4 years in 2006. The analysis indicates that half of the 9,400 increase was attributable to children with mixed parentage, while 35% (3,300) was attributable to children where both parents were non-Indigenous

people or one parent was a non-Indigenous person and the other parent's Indigenous status was unknown.

### INDIGENOUS STATUS OF PARENT(S) OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN AGED 0–4 YEARS IN 2006 AND 5–9 YEARS IN 2011(a)

	2006		2011		Change		Proportion of
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%	total change
<b>Indigenous status of parent(s)</b>							
Both parents of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin	10 105	18.2	10 516	16.2	411	4.1	4.4
One parent of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin	32 899	59.2	37 607	57.9	4 708	14.3	50.3
Both parents non-Indigenous or one parent non-Indigenous and one parent Indigenous status unknown	7 331	13.2	10 593	16.3	3 262	44.5	34.8
Both parents Indigenous status unknown	5 233	9.4	6 220	9.6	987	18.9	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>55 568</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>64 936</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>9 368</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

While this suggests that mixed couples were more likely to identify their young children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 than in 2006, it is important to note that it is not possible to fully quantify the extent to which mixed couples have contributed to the increase due to incomplete information (that is, where the Indigenous status of the parent(s) is unknown).

### Link between increased count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and increased parental identification

To further explore the link between the increased count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in the 2011 Census and increased parental identification, the ABS attempted to connect children to their mothers using the Family Tree method. For further information about this method, refer to paragraph 27 of the Explanatory Notes.

Using the Family Tree method, it is possible to match young children with their biological mothers using Census information on the relationship in the household, the family reference person indicator, and the number of children ever born. As older children may be less likely to live in the family or live with their mothers due to family dissolution or other factors, this method will generally match more younger children to their biological mothers. For this reason, the analysis focused on Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged less than one year in 2006 and compared them with their age cohort of children aged five years in 2011.

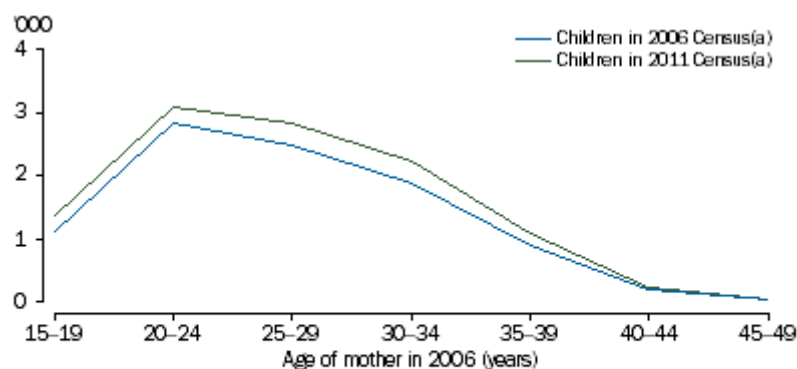
The analysis found that just over two-thirds of the matched children aged less than one year in 2006 (68%) and aged five years in 2011 (69%) had an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mother, suggesting that the Indigenous status of the biological mother did not have an impact on whether the child was more or less likely to be identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 compared with 2006.

Application of the Family Tree method resulted in 86% of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children aged less than one year in the 2006 Census being matched with their biological mothers aged 15-49 years in 2006. In the 2011 Census, 79% of Aboriginal and/or

Torres Strait Islander children aged five years in 2011 were matched with their biological mothers aged 20-54 years in 2011.

While the matching rate was lower in 2011, there were 1,400 more five year olds matched with their biological mothers in 2011 than children aged less than one year who were matched with their biological mothers in 2006. This is due to an increase of 6,700 in the count of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander females aged 20-54 years in 2011 when compared with their age cohort of females aged 15-49 years in 2006.

### **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILDREN AGED LESS THAN ONE YEAR IN 2006(a) MATCHED TO THEIR BIOLOGICAL MOTHERS(b), by age cohort in 2006**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Mothers aged 15-49 years in 2006. Figures for 2011 are for age groups five years older than in 2006 (for example, 20-24 years in 2006 is 25-29 years in 2011).

In addition to the 6,700 females aged 20-54 years in 2011 who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 but not in 2006, there were 3,700 males who also identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 but not in 2006. This resulted in 10,500 more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-54 years in 2011 than those aged 15-49 years in 2006, many of whom would have been parents. The results of the analysis above supports the premise that the increase in the counts of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander children between 2006 and 2011 is linked to an increased count of parents who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011 but not in 2006.

## **CHANGES IN INDIGENOUS STATUS ACROSS TIME AND IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS**

### **Changes in Indigenous status across life stages**

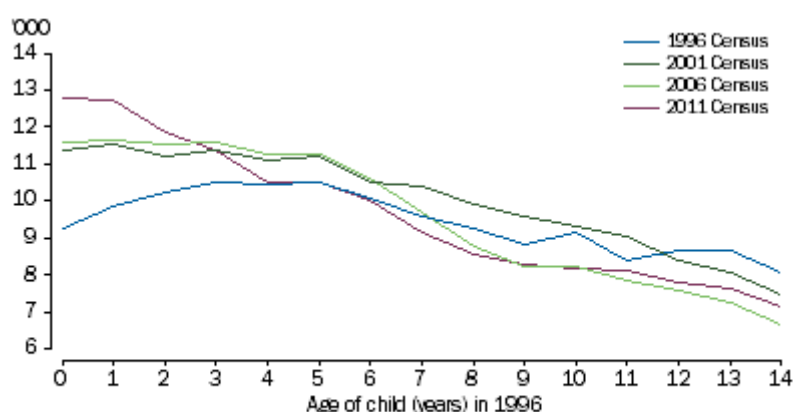
Understanding some of the reasons why a person may choose to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person assists in the interpretation of statistics about Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Unexpected changes in counts of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples, such as those observed between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, suggest some individuals do not consistently identify themselves or their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin across time and in different contexts.

A person's propensity to identify themselves and their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin tends to vary across life stages, with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people more likely to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander

origin as they grow older. The graph below shows the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-14 years in 1996 compared with their single year age cohorts in the four subsequent Censuses (that is, the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 5-19 years in 2001, 10-24 years in 2006 and 15-29 years in 2011). As the Census is not a longitudinal collection, it is not possible to say how many of the same Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are being counted across these age cohorts. In addition to mortality, two factors - Census undercount, and changing propensity to identify as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin either by parents of young children or by teenagers or young adults themselves - could contribute to changes in the counts of age cohorts between Censuses.

The graph shows that between 1996 and 2011, the count of children in the first four single year age cohorts (that is, children aged 0-3 years in 1996, 5-8 years in 2001, 10-13 years in 2006 and 15-18 years in 2011) was higher than in each previous Census. This provides the clearest indication there has been an increased propensity on the part of parents to identify their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin with each successive Census, as it is usually a parent who records the Indigenous status of a child on the Census form.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a) BY AGE COHORT IN 1996



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

In contrast, the counts of young adults in each Census are consistently lower than their single year age cohorts from the previous Census. This may be due to greater mobility in this phase of life (making an undercount of people in this age group more likely). It could also be a sign of young people having the opportunity to identify on their own behalf for the first time, resulting in some change in the reporting of Indigenous status for people in this age group. For example, the count of children aged 12-14 years in 1996 was higher than the count of people aged 17-19 years in 2001 and aged 22-24 years in 2006. In 2006, the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the same age cohort (that is, people aged 27-29 years in 2011) was lower than in 2011, possibly reflecting less mobility among people in this age group, and an increased propensity to identify as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person as part of this next stage of life.

### Other factors influencing changes in Indigenous status

In 2012, the ABS conducted a series of focus groups with the aim of understanding the reasons why an individual may (or may not) choose to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in surveys and censuses. This research explored changes to patterns of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander identification over time. Young

participants compared negative experiences of older Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people known to them with their own more positive or neutral experiences. Participants also spoke about increased confidence in their identity as they grew older, leading to a greater propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person.

Changes in the environment were also discussed in relation to changes over time in an individual's identification behaviours. Participants commonly expressed the view that it is easier and more beneficial, both at the group and the individual level, to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person now than in the past. In addition, participants' knowledge of the importance of identifying (for the purposes of social policy and population enumeration) and their increasing comfort with research questions were also mentioned.

Participants noted a range of factors influencing their decision to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, including:

- pride and confidence in their identity
- the perception that identifying may lead to positive impacts for the individual and/or wider Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community
- the amount of information available about the reasons why information on Indigenous status is being collected
- the content, purpose and relevance of the survey
- past experiences
- the belief and experience that identifying may lead to racism, discrimination or differential treatment.

Where the ABS was referenced specifically, participants expressed that they would identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the Census.

It is important to note that focus group participants were self-selecting. Participation was open to people who identified as being an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and so a bias toward consistent identification is possible in the participants' views. The findings generated by the focus groups are valuable in informing discussion on identification behaviours, but are not representative of the views of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

For more information on this research, refer to the ABS information paper Perspectives on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Identification in Selected Data Collection Contexts, 2012 (cat. no. 4726.0).

## **Changes in family dynamics**

### **CHANGES IN FAMILY DYNAMICS**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents an analysis of changes in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses and the links between parentage and the identification of children as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people.

#### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- The proportions of various types of families (for example, couples with children, couples with no children, one parent families) in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households remained relatively consistent between 2006 and 2011. There was, however, a large increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in couple families with children (32,100) and in one parent families (28,200) between 2006 and 2011.
- Mixed couples (opposite-sex couples with one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander partner and one non-Indigenous partner) made up 74% of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander couples in 2011, compared with 71% in 2006. Children in these families account for some of the people identified by their parents as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census but not in the 2006 Census.
- The count of children aged 0-14 years with at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent, and who were also identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin, increased by 13% (17,200) from 2006 to 2011. Children with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mother and a non-Indigenous father accounted for almost two-thirds of this increase.

## **ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOUSEHOLDS AND FAMILIES**

A household is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) as one or more persons, at least one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are usually resident in the same private dwelling. A family is defined as two or more people, one of whom is at least 15 years of age, who are related by blood, marriage (registered or de facto), adoption, step or fostering, and who are usually resident in the same household. Under the current Census standard, a household may include as many as three separate families. Non-family households include lone person and group households. Other households include visitors and people in non-private dwellings.

An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family is one in which at least one usual resident is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Similarly, an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household is one in which at least one usual resident is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. However, caution is advised when analysing family characteristics as the classifications used to describe Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households and families in the Census do not fully capture the complexity of many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures and living arrangements.<sup>1</sup>

According to these definitions, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families or households may also include people who are non-Indigenous or whose Indigenous status is not known. For the purposes of this analysis, this chapter only looks at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in these households or families.

### **Household size and composition**

In both the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, just over 80% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people were living in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family household. In 2006, there were 371,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in 140,500 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family households, increasing to 443,200 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in 174,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family households in 2011. Over this period, there was no change in the average size of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family households, which was 3.4 persons per household.



## HOUSEHOLD TYPE OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a) LIVING IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOUSEHOLDS(b)

	2006		2011		Relative change	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Family household	371 516	81.6	443 247	80.8	71 731	19.3
Non-family household(c)	39 041	8.6	49 726	9.1	10 685	27.4
Other household(d)	44 469	9.8	55 397	10.1	10 928	24.6
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>455 026</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>548 370</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>93 344</b>	<b>20.5</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) An Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander household is a household in which at least one usual resident is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin.

(c) Comprises people in lone person households and group households.

(d) Comprises visitors and people in non-private dwellings.

### Family households

In both 2006 and 2011, around half of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family households were living in couple families with children (189,300 in 2006 and 221,400 in 2011), and a further 38% (141,800 in 2006 and 170,000 in 2011) were living in one parent families.

## LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE LIVING IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FAMILY HOUSEHOLDS(a)

	2006		2011		Relative change	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
Couple family with no children	33 214	8.9	43 021	9.7	9 807	29.5
Couple family with children	189 262	50.9	221 389	49.9	32 127	17.0
One parent family	141 789	38.2	169 992	38.4	28 203	19.9
Other family	7 251	2.0	8 845	2.0	1 594	22.0
<b>Total persons</b>	<b>371 516</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>443 247</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>71 731</b>	<b>19.3</b>

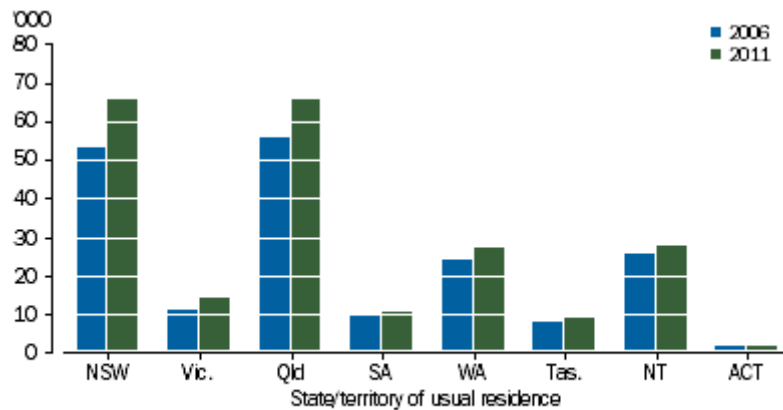
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### Couple families

In the 2011 Census, there were 32,100 (17%) more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in couple families with children and 9,800 (30%) more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in couple families with no children than in the 2006 Census.

At the state and territory level, there were large increases between 2006 and 2011 in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in couple families with children in New South Wales (12,200 or 23%) and Queensland (10,000 or 18%), with smaller increases observed in the other states and territories.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a) LIVING IN COUPLE FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The same trend was observed for counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in couple families with no children, with large increases in New South Wales (3,600 or 35%) and Queensland (2,800 or 31%).

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a) LIVING IN COUPLE FAMILIES WITH NO CHILDREN



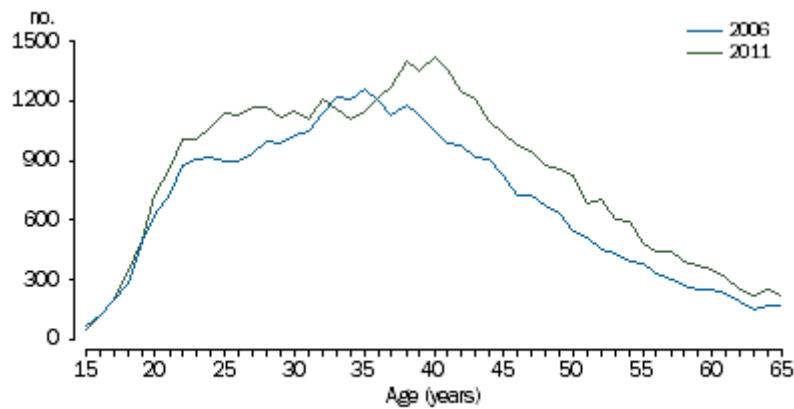
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### One parent families

Between 2006 and 2011, the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in one parent families increased from 141,800 to 170,000.

In 2006, there were 36,600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lone parents, increasing to 44,100 in 2011. While lone parents comprised 8% of the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in each Census year, there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lone parents counted in most age groups in 2011. There were also 21,000 lone parents of non-Indigenous origin (including those for whom Indigenous status was not known in 2011) living in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family households in 2011, up from 17,100 in 2006.

### AGE DISTRIBUTION OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LONE PARENTS(a)

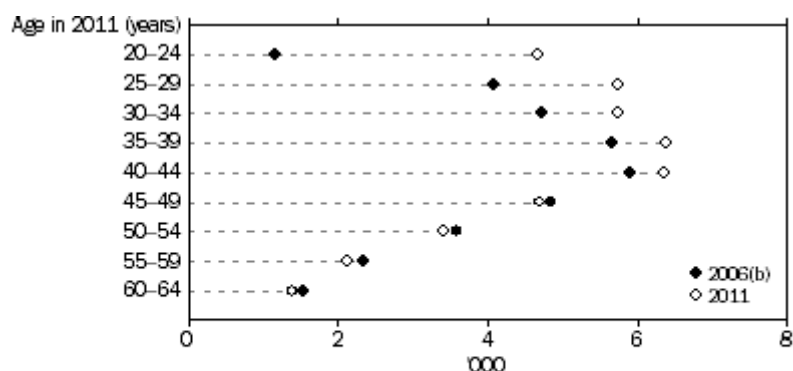


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

While it is useful to consider changes in the age distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lone parents over time, it is also important to consider changes in the age distribution of lone parents using age cohorts to assess whether these changes are in line with expectations. This has been done using Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lone parent age cohorts for those aged 20-64 years in 2011 (that is, compared with lone parents aged 15-59 years in 2006). This analysis excludes lone parents aged 65 years and over in 2011 (that is, 60 years and over in 2006) as they are unlikely to still have dependent children who are included on their Census forms. Changes in age cohorts for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are discussed in more detail in the chapter Changes in Age and Sex Structure.

When we compare the age distribution of lone parents by age cohorts, there is a large increase in the count of lone parents aged 20-44 years in 2011, and especially among those aged 20-24 years (when compared with lone parents aged 15-19 years in 2006). This increase could be attributed to a number of factors, including any one or all of the following: more lone parents identifying themselves as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census; more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people becoming lone parents due to family dissolution between 2006 and 2011; and single Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people becoming parents for the first time between 2006 and 2011.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER LONE PARENTS AGED 20-64 YEARS(a), by age cohort in 2011



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 60-64 years 2011 are aged 55-59 years in 2006).

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COUPLES AND MIXED COUPLES

For the purpose of the following analysis, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander couples are opposite-sex couples who are married or in a de facto relationship, both members of which are at home on Census night, and at least one of whom is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. Mixed couples are defined as having one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander partner and one non-Indigenous partner.

Mixed couples as a proportion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander couples have increased over time from 64% of all couples in 1996 to 70% in 2001, 71% in 2006 and 74% in 2011.

Between 2006 and 2011, there were 4,700 more Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people who reported being in a couple relationship with another Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. This resulted in an 11% (2,300) increase in the count of couples where both partners were of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in 2011. The count of mixed couples in which only the husband/male partner or the wife/female partner was an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person also increased by 14,900 (7,400 husband/male partner only and 7,500 wife/female partner only) between 2006 and 2011.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COUPLES(a)(b), by Indigenous status of each partner

	2006		2011		Relative change	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
<b>Indigenous status of partner</b>						
Both husband and wife/male and female partner are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	21 845	29.4	24 192	26.4	2 347	10.7
<b>Mixed couples(c)</b>						
Only husband/male partner is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	24 507	33.0	31 952	34.9	7 445	30.4
Only wife/female partner is Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person	27 835	37.5	35 333	38.6	7 498	26.9
<i>Total mixed couples</i>	<i>52 342</i>	<i>70.6</i>	<i>67 285</i>	<i>73.6</i>	<i>14 943</i>	<i>28.5</i>
<b>Total couples</b>	<b>74 187</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>91 477</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>17 290</b>	<b>23.3</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Includes couples who are married or in a de facto relationship. Excludes same-sex couples, lone parents and couples in which one partner was absent on Census night.

(c) Couples with one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander partner and one non-Indigenous partner.

In both the Australian Capital Territory and Tasmania, mixed couples have comprised a consistently high proportion of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander couples since 1996, while in the Northern Territory, the proportion of mixed couples has remained consistently low. In all other states, mixed couples have accounted for a growing share of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander couples over the 15 years from 1996 to 2011.

### MIXED COUPLES(a) AS A PROPORTION OF ALL ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER COUPLES(b)(c)



(a) Couples with one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander partner and one non-Indigenous partner.  
 (b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (c) Includes couples who are married or in a de facto relationship. Excludes same-sex couples, lone parents and couples in which one partner was absent on Census night.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENTAGE

In families in which one parent is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person and the other person is non-Indigenous, children of that relationship may be identified as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person or non-Indigenous person in the Census. Historically, the Census Household Form has, in most cases, been completed by parents on behalf of their children and so in those instances the parents decide how to report the Indigenous status of their children. Differential reporting of the Indigenous status of children from these families across generations has been observed.<sup>2</sup>

In both 2006 and 2011, 98% of children with two Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parents were also identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. The corresponding proportions for children of mixed parentage with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mother **or** father only were 94% and 85% respectively in both 2006 and 2011. While parentage does not necessarily represent a biological relationship, it is notable that in both Censuses, 15% of children with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander father only and 7% of children with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mother only were identified as non-Indigenous people or did not have their Indigenous status recorded.

Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the count of children with at least one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent who were identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin increased by 17,200 (13%). Those with an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander mother only accounted for around two-thirds (65% or 11,100) of this increase.

### INDIGENOUS STATUS OF CHILDREN AGED 0-14 YEARS WITH AT LEAST ONE ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PARENT(a)

	2006		2011		Relative change	
	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
ABORIGINAL AND/OR TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER CHILD						
Only father is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	25 984	84.8	31 209	85.2	5 225	20.1
Only mother is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	72 029	93.8	83 131	93.5	11 102	15.4
Both parents are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	30 022	98.3	30 868	98.2	846	2.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 035</b>	<b>92.8</b>	<b>145 208</b>	<b>92.5</b>	<b>17 173</b>	<b>13.4</b>

## NON-INDIGENOUS CHILD(c)

Only father is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	4 657	15.2	5 435	14.8	778	16.7
Only mother is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	4 792	6.2	5 808	6.5	1 016	21.2
Both parents are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	513	1.7	558	1.8	45	8.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>9 962</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>11 801</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>1 839</b>	<b>18.5</b>

## ALL CHILDREN

Only father is an an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	30 641	100.0	36 644	100.0	6 003	19.6
Only mother is an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person(b)	76 821	100.0	88 939	100.0	12 118	15.8
Both parents are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people	30 535	100.0	31 426	100.0	891	2.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>137 997</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>157 009</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>19 012</b>	<b>13.8</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Includes lone parents. Excludes couples in which the Indigenous status of one partner was not stated.

(c) Includes Indigenous status not stated.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Changes in family dynamics can provide important context for changes in people's propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person over time. In particular, the increase in the count of mixed couples and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander lone parents in the 2011 Census corresponds with the large increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children with one Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander parent. This supports the finding that a change in the propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person has resulted in more parents identifying themselves and their children in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census. This is examined further in the chapter Changing Propensity to Identify as Being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Origin between Censuses.

## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> For further information about the complexity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family structures and living arrangements, refer to Morphy, F 2006, Lost in Translation? Remote Indigenous households and definitions of the family, Family Matters, no. 73, pp. 23–31.

<sup>2</sup> Gray, A 1998, Parentage and Indigenous population change, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research Discussion Paper 166/1998.

# Changes by selected characteristics

## CHANGES BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS



### Changes in Family Dynamics

Includes: **Summary of Findings, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Households and Families, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Couples and Mixed Couples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Parentage**



### Changes in Distribution of Census Counts by Remoteness

Includes: **Summary of Findings, Changes in Census Counts by Remoteness, Remoteness by Age**



### Changes in Labour Force Status

Includes: **Summary of Findings, Overview of Labour Force Status, National Labour Force Outcomes, Labour Force Outcomes by Remoteness, Labour Force Outcomes by Age, Labour Force Outcomes by Sex**



### Changes in Educational Attainment

Includes: **Summary of Findings, Year 12 or Equivalent Attainment, Non-School Qualifications**

## Changes in distribution of Census counts by remoteness

### CHANGES IN DISTRIBUTION OF CENSUS COUNTS BY REMOTENESS

#### INTRODUCTION

The Remoteness Structure is a geographic classification that divides Australia into broad regions that share common characteristics of remoteness. This chapter focuses on the distribution of the increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses by remoteness nationally and within states and territories. It also presents an analysis of how different age groups contributed to the increase across Remoteness Areas.

The base geography used to construct the five Remoteness Areas in the 2011 Census was different to that used in the 2006 Census; however, the impact of the change in classification is considered to be minimal. In most cases it is possible to make a comparison of the same Remoteness Area across the two Censuses. For more information about the classification refer to Statistical Geography Fact Sheet: Remoteness Structure.

Changes in the Census counts by Remoteness Area between 2006 and 2011 have not been adjusted to account for the potential impact of mortality and/or variability of the undercount and mobility between Remoteness Areas. For more information about this refer to paragraph 23 of the Explanatory Notes.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

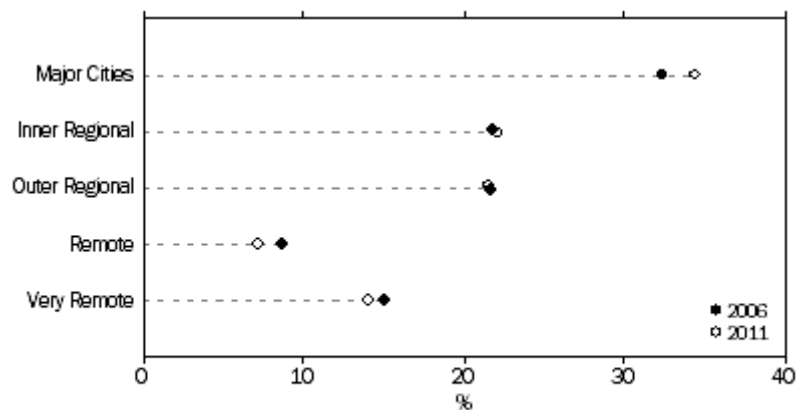
- In 2011, the general distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by Remoteness Area was largely unchanged from 2006.
- Of the 21% (93,300) more people who identified as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census, the majority (83,100) were living in non-remote areas. In particular, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities accounted for the highest proportion (44% or 41,300) of the increase in 2011.
- An age cohort analysis showed that the increase in the overall count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over in 2011 varied by Remoteness Area. There was a substantial increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait

Islander people aged five years and over in 2011 in non-remote areas, most notably in major cities (18,500), and decreases in remote (4,100) and very remote (200) areas.

## CHANGES IN CENSUS COUNTS BY REMOTENESS

The distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by Remoteness Area in the 2011 Census was largely unchanged from the 2006 Census, with a slight shift in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities, and remote and very remote areas.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Distribution by Remoteness Area



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

While nationally there was very little change in the distribution of the Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people across Remoteness Areas between 2006 and 2011, the relative increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people varied by Remoteness Area. The highest gains were in non-remote Australia, with a 28% increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in major cities, a 22% increase in inner regional areas and a 20% increase in outer regional areas. The counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in remote and very remote areas also increased but to a lesser extent, up 1% and 13% respectively.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Counts by Remoteness Area

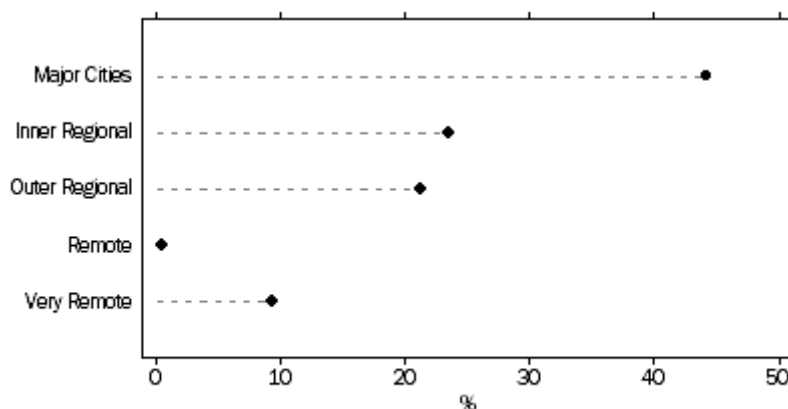
	2006	2011	Relative change		Contribution to total change
	no.	no.	no.	%	%
Major Cities	147 296	188 548	41 252	28.0	44.2
Inner Regional	99 312	121 291	21 979	22.1	23.5
Outer Regional	98 653	118 484	19 831	20.1	21.2
Remote	39 408	39 755	347	0.9	0.4
Very Remote	68 752	77 489	8 737	12.7	9.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>455 025</b>	<b>548 369</b>	<b>93 344</b>	<b>20.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities accounted for the greatest proportion (44% or 41,300) of the additional 93,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who were counted in the 2011 Census compared with 2006, followed by those living in inner regional areas (24% or 22,000) and outer regional areas (21% or 19,800).

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Distribution of change in counts between 2006 and 2011

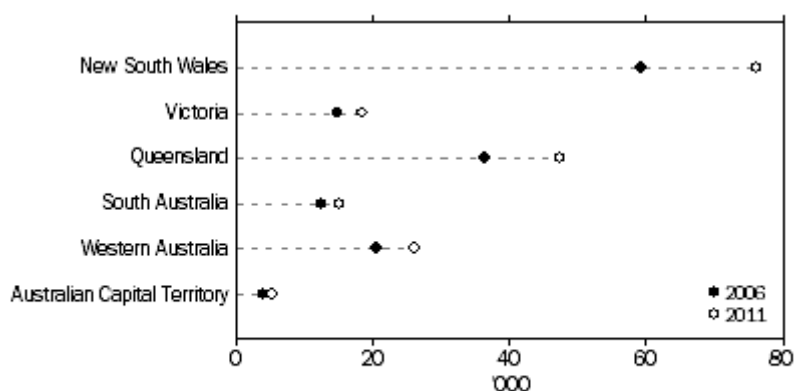


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### Major cities

In 2011, there were 41,300 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities than in 2006. New South Wales and Queensland accounted for more than two-thirds (68% or 28,000) of this increase. There was also a substantial increase in the number of people living in major cities in Western Australia (27% or 5,500) and Victoria (26% or 3,800) between 2006 and 2011.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Major Cities(b)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

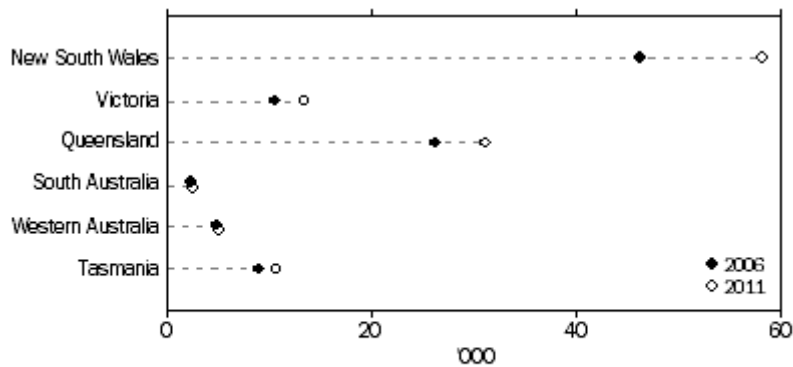
(b) Tasmania and the Northern Territory do not have a Major City classification.

### Inner Regional areas

The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in inner regional areas increased by 22,000 people between 2006 and 2011. Three states accounted for 90% (19,800) of this increase - New South Wales, Queensland and Victoria. In South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania there was very little change from the

2006 counts.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Inner Regional Areas(b)**

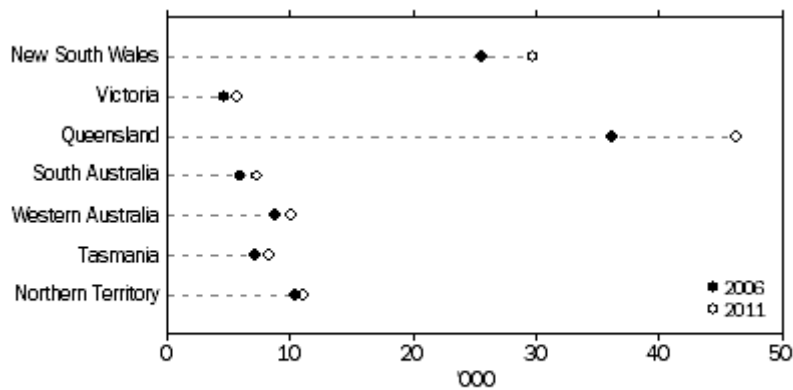


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) The Northern Territory does not have an Inner Regional classification. Figures for the Australian Capital Territory are not shown for confidentiality reasons.

**Outer regional areas**

The 2011 Census counted 19,800 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in outer regional areas than the 2006 Census, with the largest increase occurring in Queensland, followed by New South Wales. Together these two states accounted for 72% (14,300) of the increase. The remaining states (Victoria, South Australia, Western Australia and Tasmania) and the Northern Territory each recorded small increases in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in their outer regional areas.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Outer Regional Areas(b)**

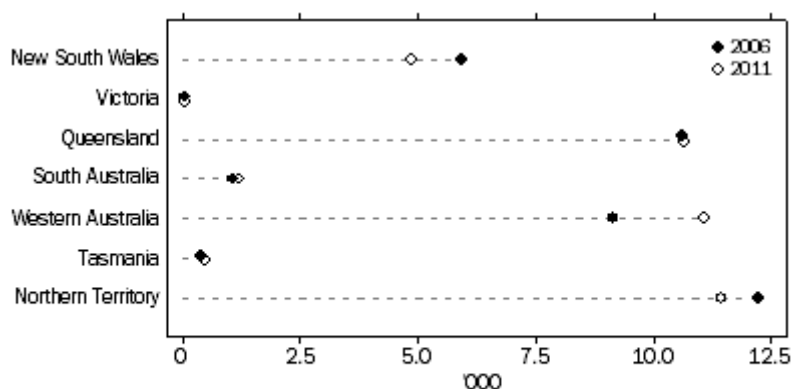


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) The Australian Capital Territory does not have an Outer Regional classification.

**Remote areas**

In remote areas, there was an overall increase of 350 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people from 2006 to 2011, but distribution varied across the country. Western Australia recorded an increase of 1,900 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, equivalent to a 21% rise in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the remote areas of this state. New South Wales and the Northern Territory showed a decrease in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in remote areas (1,100 and 800 respectively), while the remaining states showed little change from 2006.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Remote Areas(b)

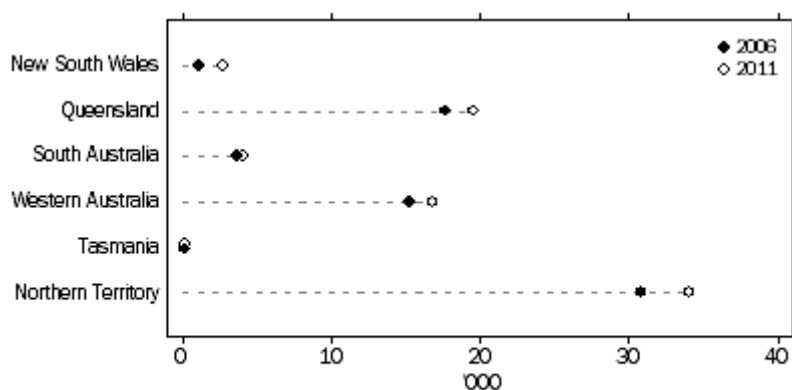


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) The Australian Capital Territory does not have a Remote classification.

### Very remote areas

The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in very remote areas increased by 8,700 people between 2006 and 2011. The Northern Territory accounted for 38% (3,300) of this increase. New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia and Western Australia recorded smaller increases in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in their very remote areas, while Tasmania showed little change from 2006.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), Very Remote Areas(b)

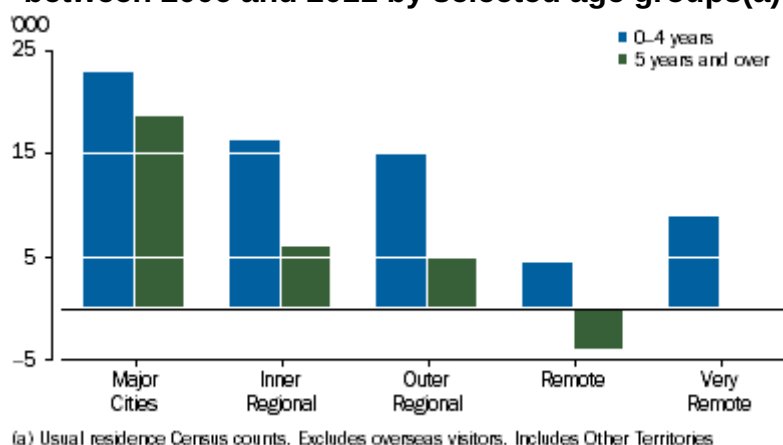


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Victoria and the Australian Capital Territory do not have a Very Remote classification.

### REMOTENESS BY AGE

While almost three-quarters (72% or 67,400) of the national increase (93,300) in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses came from children aged 0-4 years in 2011, more than one-quarter (28% or 25,900) of the increase was from people aged five years and over in 2011. People aged five years and over in 2011 accounted for 45% (18,500) of the total increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities, 27% (5,900) of the total increase for those living in inner regional areas and 24% (4,800) of the total increase for those living in outer regional areas.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE, Contribution to increase between 2006 and 2011 by selected age groups(a)



In major cities, the contribution to the total increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people made by those aged five years and over in 2011 (18,500) was almost as high as that made by those aged 0-4 years (22,700). This increase supports the finding in earlier chapters that there were more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people moving into this age group in the 2011 Census, most likely due to a greater propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in 2011 than in 2006.

### Remoteness by age cohort

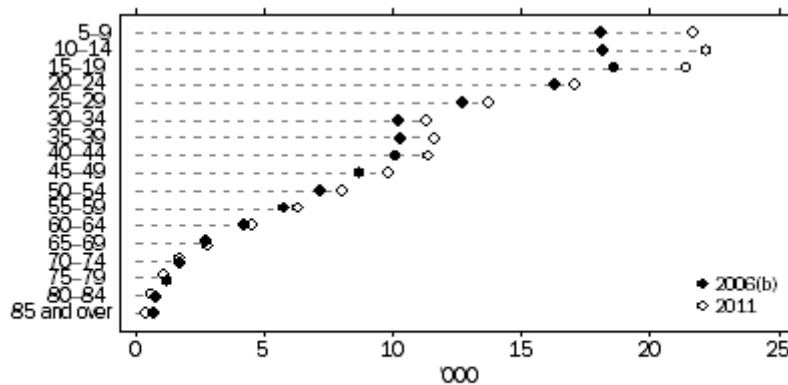
This section looks at Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Remoteness Areas by age cohorts to assess whether the changes that occurred in each age group by Remoteness Area were in line with expectations. An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Changes in age cohorts are discussed in more detail in the chapter Changes in Age and Sex Structure.

When comparing age cohorts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, it is expected that there will be a very high increase in the count of each Remoteness Area from children aged 0-4 years in 2011 due to births since the 2006 Census, and small changes for people aged five years and over in 2011 due to mortality, mobility and/or variability of the undercount for different age groups over time.

### Major Cities

For Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over in 2011, the increase in the count of those living in major cities (18,500) was far greater than in any of the other Remoteness Areas. The largest gains were among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth aged 5-19 years in 2011, who contributed over half of this increase (56% or 10,400). There were also increases in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for all five-year age groups up to and including 60-64 years in 2011. The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 65 years and over in 2011 living in major cities remained similar to that in 2006.

## ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), By age cohort in 2011, Major Cities

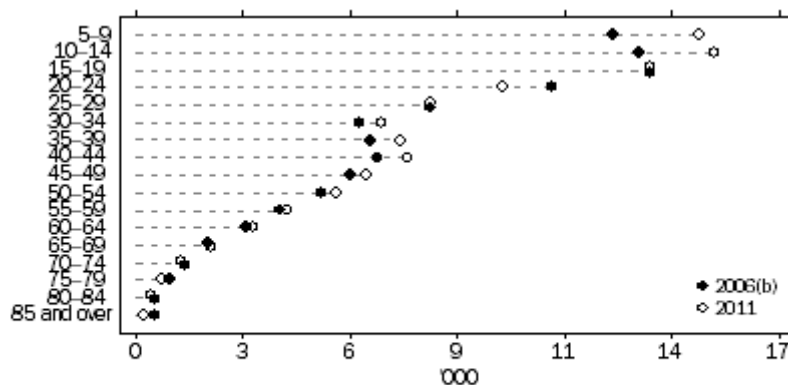


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Inner Regional areas

Between 2006 and 2011 there was an increase of 5,900 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over living in inner regional areas. Of these, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and youth aged 5-14 years in 2011 contributed the largest increase (4,300) followed by those aged 35-44 years (1,600), while the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years declined (1,400). Similar to the pattern observed for major cities, counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 55 years and over in 2011 living in inner regional areas were consistent with the counts of those aged 50 years and over in 2006. While this could indicate a very low mortality rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in these areas, it is more likely to be the result of an increase in propensity to identify as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. Mobility between Remoteness Areas may have also contributed to these higher than expected 2011 counts.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), By age cohort in 2011, Inner Regional Areas



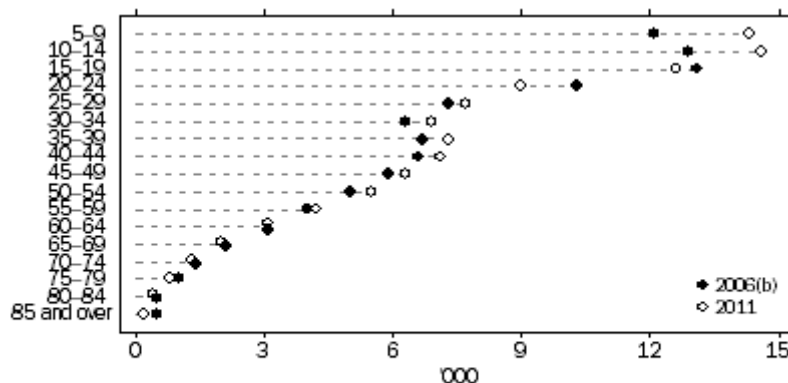
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Outer Regional areas

The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over in 2011 living in outer regional areas increased by 4,800 compared with 2006. Changes by age cohort in outer regional areas followed a similar pattern to those for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in inner regional areas. Of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander

people aged five years and over in 2011, children and youth aged 5-14 years and those aged 30-39 years in 2011 contributed the largest increases in counts (3,900 and 1,200 respectively). The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census in outer regional areas was higher in 2011 than in 2006 for all five-year age groups up to and including 55-59 years, with the exception of those aged 15-24 years in 2011 which decreased by 1,800.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), By age cohort in 2011, Outer Regional Areas

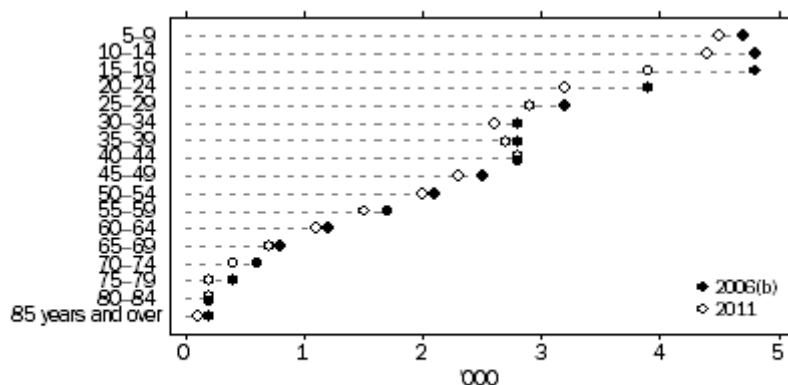


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Remote areas

There was a decrease of 4,100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over living in remote areas in 2011 compared with 2006. All five-year age groups showed a decrease, with the largest decreases recorded for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-19 years (900) and 20-24 years (700) in 2011.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), By age cohort in 2011, Remote Areas



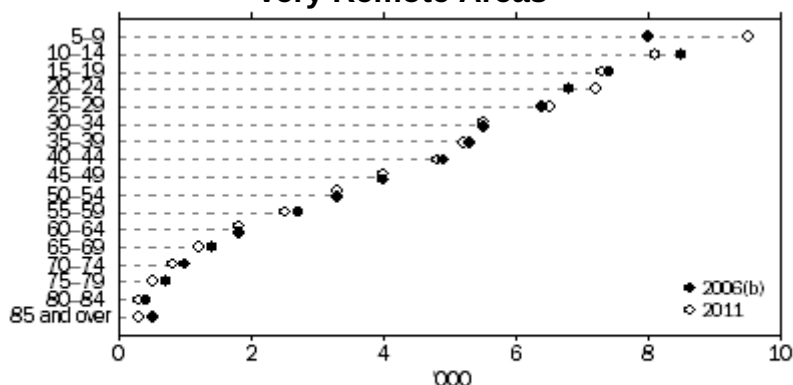
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

### Very Remote areas

In very remote areas, there was a slight decrease (200 people) in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged five years and over between 2006 and 2011.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 5-9 years and people aged 20-29 years in 2011 were the only age groups to show an increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in very remote areas compared with 2006.

### ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE(a), By age cohort in 2011, Very Remote Areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in the 2011 Census can be largely attributed to an increase in counts in non-remote Australia, particularly major cities. People identifying as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in major cities accounted for 44% of the total increase, which was around the same proportion as that contributed by those in both inner and outer regional areas combined (45%). The large increase in major cities could be partially linked to increased numbers of people moving for education, employment or other opportunities. Further research should incorporate mobility and mortality considerations for a more complete assessment.

## Changes in labour force status

### CHANGES IN LABOUR FORCE STATUS

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter compares labour force outcomes for people aged 15 years and over by Remoteness Areas, age and sex using Census data. When there is a large increase in Census counts for a population it is useful to understand how this may have impacted on characteristics such as labour force status.

Note that it is important to distinguish between Census labour force data and the monthly labour force statistics that are released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS). The monthly labour force statistics are Australia's official measure of unemployment, with data collected by interview over an eight month period from a sample of the civilian population aged 15 years and over. Labour force estimates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not available from the monthly Labour Force Survey. The 2011 Census collected labour force information from all persons in Australia aged 15 years and over who were counted on Census night.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- There were only small changes between 2006 and 2011 in the employment to population ratio (down 1.8 percentage points), labour force participation rate (down 1.2 percentage points) and unemployment rate (up 1.5 percentage points) for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over nationally.
- The pattern of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people's labour force status by age did not differ significantly between 2006 and 2011. The changes in the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were employed, unemployed or not in the labour force followed expected labour force changes associated with age.
- Changes in key labour market indicators were greater for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men than women. The employment to population ratio declined by three percentage points, the labour force participation rate declined by two percentage points and the unemployment rate increased by two percentage points for men, while the corresponding changes for women were less than one percentage point.

## OVERVIEW OF LABOUR FORCE STATUS

Labour force reporting commonly focuses on people aged 15 years and over, or 15-64 years when comparing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population with the non-Indigenous population.

Key labour market indicators include employment to population ratios, labour force participation rates and unemployment rates. Each of these rates is derived using the labour force status (employed, unemployed or not in the labour force) of people as reported in the Census. Each rate is calculated as follows:

- the employment to population ratio is the number of people who have stated they are employed expressed as a percentage of the total population
- the labour force participation rate is the number of people who have stated they are employed or unemployed expressed as a percentage of the total population
- the unemployment rate is the number of people who have stated they are unemployed expressed as a percentage of the total labour force.

In each case, people whose labour force status has not been stated are included in the total population figure for these calculations.

In this chapter, comparisons of people's labour force status between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses exclude people whose labour force status was not stated. In 2011, labour force status was unknown for 5% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over, down from 6% in 2006. Caution should be used when drawing conclusions for populations which have high proportions of not stated responses, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in remote and very remote areas where the labour force status was unknown for 7% in 2011. High proportions of not stated responses limit the reliability of known responses in those populations as it is unclear how people whose labour force status has not been stated may affect changes in the labour market outcomes.

## **LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)**



	Known labour force status(b)		Labour force status not stated		Total
	no.	%	no.	%	no.
2006 Census					
<b>Remoteness Area(c)</b>					
Major Cities	87 881	95.1	4 533	4.9	92 414
Inner Regional	56 971	95.3	2 791	4.7	59 762
Outer Regional	56 822	93.8	3 744	6.2	60 566
Remote	22 889	91.2	2 220	8.8	25 109
Very Remote	41 125	91.7	3 700	8.3	44 825
<i>Total(a)</i>	<i>266 752</i>	<i>94.0</i>	<i>17 159</i>	<i>6.0</i>	<i>283 911</i>
Male	127 996	93.6	8 702	6.4	136 698
Female	138 756	94.3	8 457	5.7	147 213
<b>Total(a)</b>	<b>266 752</b>	<b>94.0</b>	<b>17 159</b>	<b>6.0</b>	<b>283 911</b>
2011 Census					
<b>Remoteness Area(c)</b>					
Major Cities	117 358	96.3	4 551	3.7	121 909
Inner Regional	72 156	96.3	2 768	3.7	74 924
Outer Regional	71 164	95.4	3 440	4.6	74 604
Remote	24 566	92.8	1 904	7.2	26 470
Very Remote	47 360	92.9	3 647	7.1	51 007
<i>Total(a)</i>	<i>334 057</i>	<i>95.1</i>	<i>17 224</i>	<i>4.9</i>	<i>351 281</i>
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	161 127	94.9	8 685	5.1	169 812
Female	172 930	95.3	8 539	4.7	181 469
<b>Total(a)</b>	<b>334 057</b>	<b>95.1</b>	<b>17 224</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>351 281</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Includes employed, unemployed and not in the labour force.

(c) Remoteness Areas are described in Statistical Geography Fact Sheet: Remoteness Structure.

Ideally, comparisons between 2006 and 2011 labour force outcomes should be measuring change in outcomes for the same population over time. However, the ability to accurately measure this change can potentially be masked by the unexpectedly large increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over recorded in the 2011 Census (24% or 67,400). If the people who contributed to this increase have different labour market characteristics to those people who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2006, then this may be driving the changes observed rather than real changes in labour market outcomes between 2006 and 2011.

## NATIONAL LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES

According to the Census, the national employment to population ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over decreased by two percentage points (from 46% to 44%) between 2006 and 2011, while the unemployment rate increased by two percentage points to 17%, and the labour force participation rate decreased by one percentage point to 53%.

## SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b)

	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
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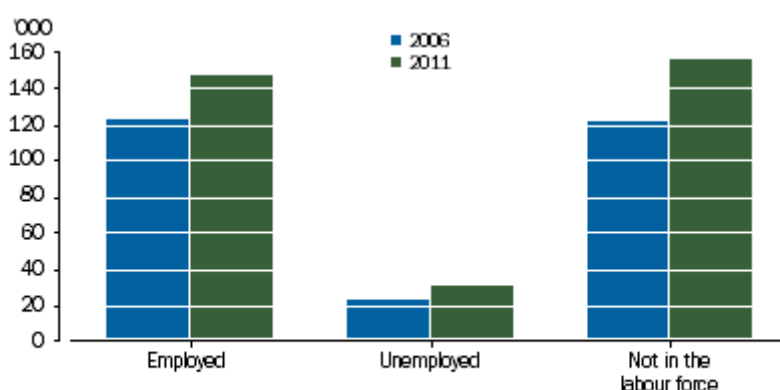
Employment to population ratio	46.0	44.2	-1.8
Labour force participation rate	54.5	53.3	-1.2
Unemployment rate	15.6	17.1	1.5

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the largest proportional increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over was for unemployed people (35% or 7,800), followed by those not in the labour force (28% or 34,500), and then employed people (20% or 25,000).

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES BY REMOTENESS

#### Major cities

Between 2006 and 2011, there were minimal changes to the employment to population ratio and unemployment rates for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in major cities, and no change to the labour force participation rate.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b), Major cities

	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	50.0	50.2	0.2
Labour force participation rate	58.8	58.8	0.0
Unemployment rate	15.0	14.6	-0.3

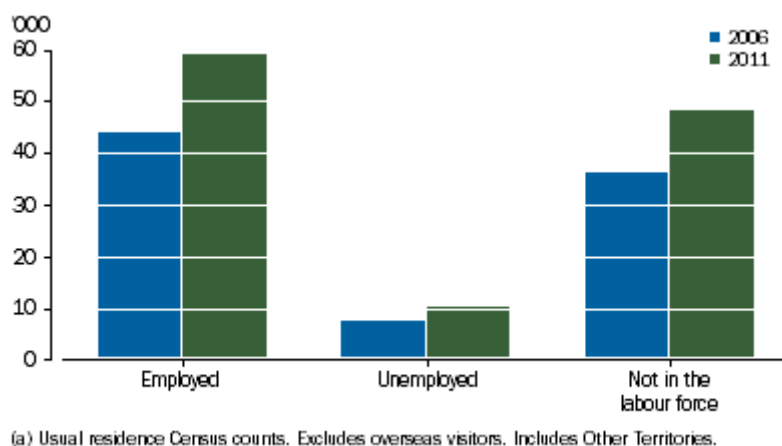
(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and

over in major cities increased by 2,400 (30%) between 2006 and 2011, while the increase in the counts of employed people and people not in the labour force were greater at 15,000 and 12,200 respectively (34% each).

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Major cities



### Inner regional areas

The labour force participation rate and unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in inner regional areas declined by one percentage point each to 53% and 18% respectively between 2006 and 2011, while the employment to population ratio remained steady at 44%.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b), Inner regional areas

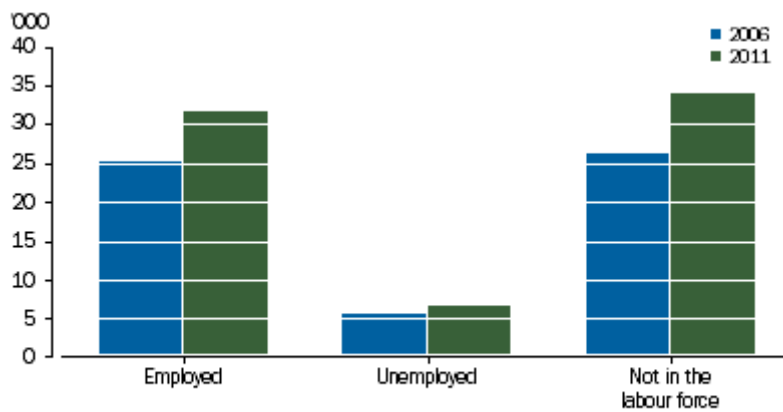
	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	44.1	43.8	-0.3
Labour force participation rate	54.0	53.1	-0.9
Unemployment rate	18.4	17.5	-0.9

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in inner regional areas increased by 1,100 (19%) between 2006 and 2011 while the counts of those who were employed or not in the labour force increased by 6,400 (26%) and 7,700 (29%) respectively.

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Inner regional areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

## Outer regional areas

Between 2006 and 2011, the employment to population ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in outer regional areas dropped by three percentage points to 41%, the labour force participation rate dropped by two percentage points to 51%, and the unemployment rate increased by three percentage points to 20%.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Outer regional areas

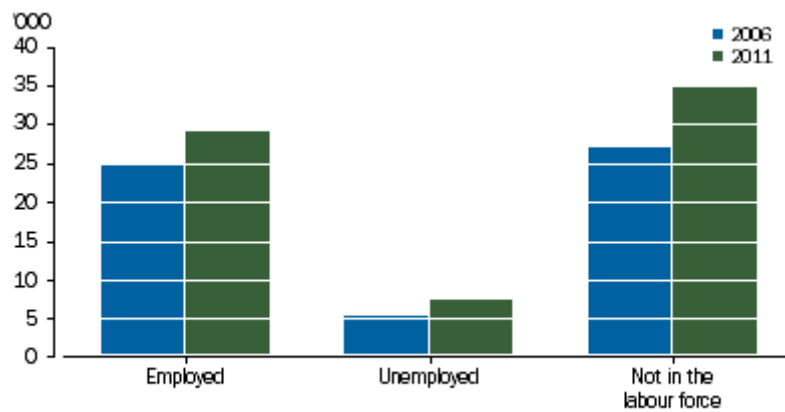
	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	43.5	40.6	-2.9
Labour force participation rate	52.7	50.9	-1.8
Unemployment rate	17.6	20.2	2.6

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in outer regional areas increased by 2,100 (39%) between 2006 and 2011, while the count of those who were employed or not in the labour force increased by 4,200 (17%) and 8,100 (30%) respectively.

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Outer regional areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

## Remote areas

Between 2006 and 2011, the unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in remote areas increased by four percentage points to 18%. The employment to population ratio declined by three percentage points to 41% in 2011 and the labour force participation rate declined by two percentage points to 50%.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b), Remote areas

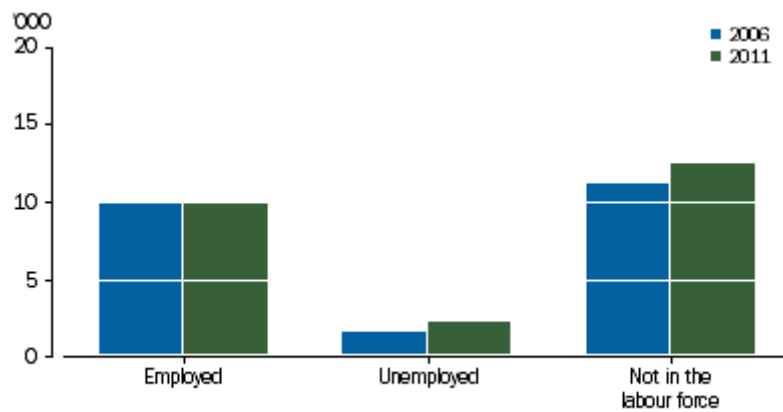
	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	43.7	40.5	-3.2
Labour force participation rate	51.1	49.5	-1.6
Unemployment rate	14.5	18.1	3.6

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in remote areas increased by 500 (30%) between 2006 and 2011, while the count of those not participating in the labour force increased by 1,200 (11%) and the those who were employed decreased by 60 (1%). It is important to note that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over whose labour force status was not stated was significantly higher for those living in remote and very remote areas than in other areas for both 2006 and 2011 and so any changes in the proportion of people employed, unemployed or not in the labour force should be treated with caution.

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Remote areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### Very remote areas

The changes to the employment to population ratio, labour force participation rate and unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in very remote areas between 2006 and 2011 were greater than for any other Remoteness Area. The employment to population ratio declined by seven percentage points (to 38%), the labour force participation rate declined by four percentage points (to 46%) while the unemployment rate increased by seven percentage points (to 18%).

#### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b), Very remote areas

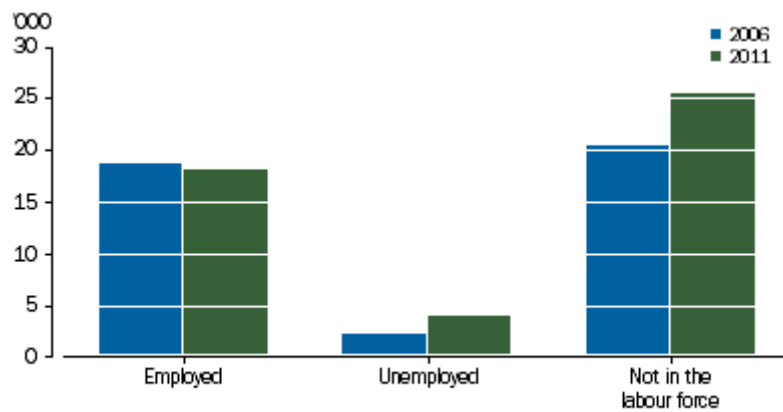
	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	45.2	38.0	-7.2
Labour force participation rate	50.4	46.2	-4.2
Unemployment rate	10.3	17.7	7.4

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in very remote areas increased by 1,700 (to 3,900) between 2006 and 2011. This increase represented a proportional increase of 81%, which was the largest proportional increase for any labour force status changes across any of the Remoteness Areas. There were 5,100 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force living in very remote areas in 2011, an increase of 25% from the 2006 Census, while the count of employed people declined by 580 (3%). It is important to note that the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over whose labour force status was not stated was significantly higher for those living in remote and very remote areas than in other areas for both 2006 and 2011 and any changes in the proportion of people employed, unemployed or not in the labour force should be treated with caution.

#### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a), Very remote areas

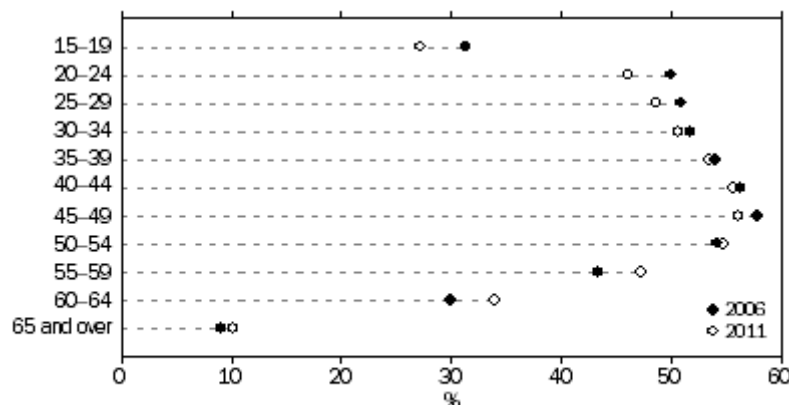


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

## LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES BY AGE

In the 2011 Census, the general pattern observed in the distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by labour force status within each age group was similar to that observed in the 2006 Census. The proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-19 years and 20-24 years in 2011 was four percentage points lower than recorded for the same age groups in 2006. For those aged 25-49 years, the difference was between one and two percentage points lower in 2011, but between one and four percentage points higher for people aged 50-64 years.

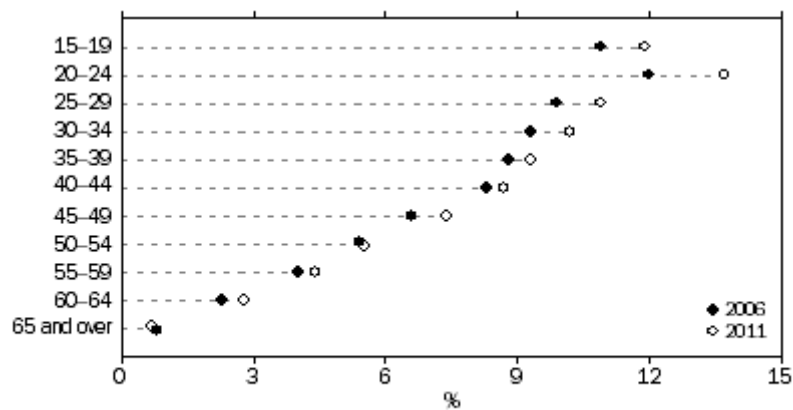
### PROPORTION OF EMPLOYED PEOPLE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

There was little change in the pattern of unemployment by age group between 2006 and 2011, with the largest increase observed among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years (an increase of two percentage points).

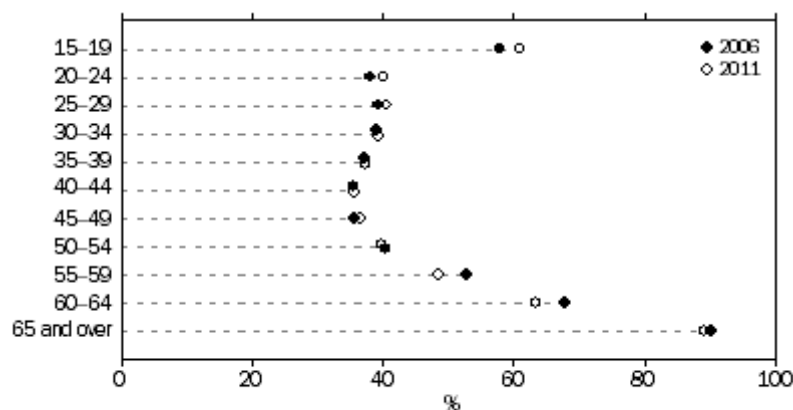
### PROPORTION OF UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

The lower proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and over who were employed in both Censuses was met by corresponding increases in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50-64 years who were not in the labour force.

### PROPORTION OF PEOPLE NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

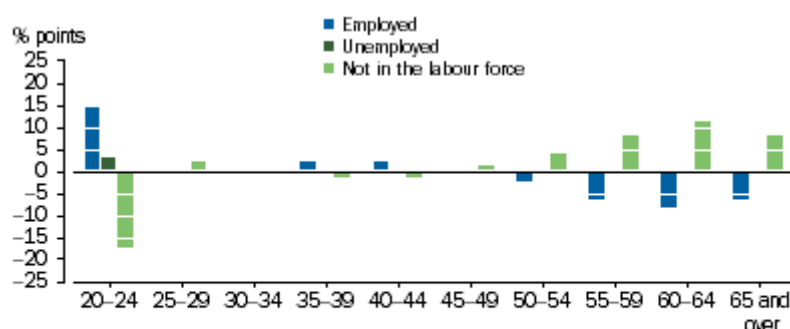
As changes in labour force status can be quite different for people born in different years, this section now looks at the changes in labour force status using age cohorts to assess whether the changes that occurred in each age group were in line with expectations. An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Changes in age cohorts for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are discussed in more detail in the chapter Changes in Age and Sex Structure.

When comparing age cohorts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the changes in the proportions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who are employed, unemployed or not in the labour force follow the pattern generally expected of the labour force changes associated with age. A high increase (15 percentage points) in the proportion of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 20-24 years in 2011 (that is, people aged 15-19 years in 2006) and a smaller increase in the proportion of unemployed people (three percentage points) reflects the move out of schooling and into the labour force for this age group. Aside from this age cohort, no age cohort recorded increasing unemployment as a proportion of the population. Increases in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait



Islander people not in the labour force begin to occur for people aged 45 years and over in 2011 (40 years and over in 2006) and continue to increase after that age, reflecting where retirement more commonly occurs.

### PERCENTAGE POINT CHANGE IN LABOUR FORCE STATUS BETWEEN 2006 AND 2011(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people(b) by age cohort in 2011



(a) A result of zero indicates there was no change in the proportion of people in that age group between 2006 and 2011.

(b) Includes labour force status not stated.

(c) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

## LABOUR FORCE OUTCOMES BY SEX

### Male Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour force outcomes

Changes in the employment to population ratio, labour force participation rate and unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years and over were greater than observed for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females between 2006 and 2011. The employment to population ratio for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years and over decreased by three percentage points to 48%, The labour force participation rate decreased by two percentage points to 58%, and the unemployment rate increased by two percentage points to 18%.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years and over(b)

	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	51.2	47.9	-3.3
Labour force participation rate	60.8	58.4	-2.4
Unemployment rate	15.8	18.1	2.3

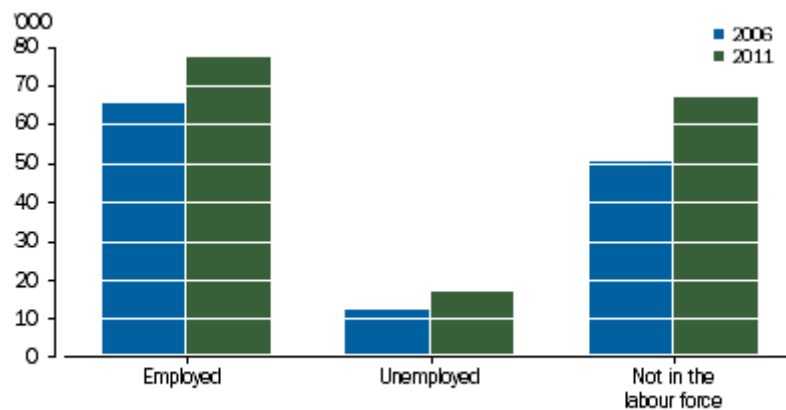
(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

There was a 26% (33,100) increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years and over between 2006 and 2011. There was a 39% (4,800) increase in the count of unemployed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males which was more than double the 18% (11,600) proportional increase in the count of employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males. The count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males

aged 15 years and over who were not in the labour force increased by 33% (16,800).

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander males aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

### Female Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander labour force outcomes

Between 2006 and 2011, there was no change to the employment to population ratio, labour force participation rate and unemployment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over.

### SELECTED LABOUR MARKET INDICATORS(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over(b)

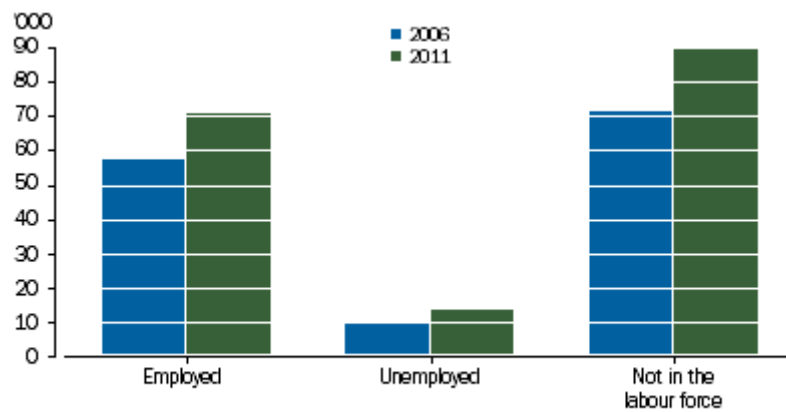
	2006 %	2011 %	Change % points
Employment to population ratio	41.2	40.8	-0.4
Labour force participation rate	48.7	48.6	-0.1
Unemployment rate	15.4	16.0	0.6

(a) Ratio and rates are calculated using the total population, which includes labour force status not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

There was a 25% (34,200) increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. In 2011, there were 70,600 employed Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females, up 23% (13,400) from 2006. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females who were unemployed accounted for the greatest proportional increase, up 29% (3,000), while the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females not in the labour force increased by 25% (17,800).

### LABOUR FORCE STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females aged 15 years and over(a)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

While the Census data should not be considered an official measure of labour force outcomes, it does allow some conclusions to be drawn about the labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. This chapter has shown there has been very little change in the labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a known labour force status between 2006 and 2011. Further analysis of labour force characteristics considering variables such as educational attainment or mobility could provide greater insight into changes in the labour force status of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between the 2006 and the 2011 Censuses.

## Changes in educational attainment

### CHANGES IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who have a Year 12 (or equivalent) or non-school qualification. Analysis of Year 12 or equivalent attainment is presented by age and Remoteness Area, and analysis of non-school qualification attainment is presented by level of qualification and age. When there is a large increase in Census counts for a population it is useful to understand how the increase may have impacted on characteristics such as educational attainment.

#### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Between 2006 and 2011, there were increases of around five percentage points each in the attainment rate for Year 12 or equivalent qualifications (20% in 2006 to 25% in 2011) and for non-school qualifications (25% in 2006 to 31% in 2011) among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over living in major cities accounted for nearly half (12,900) of the national increase in the count of people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification between 2006 and 2011. More than one-quarter (7,800) of the national increase came from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, most notably those aged 30-44 years (4,500).

- The largest proportional increase in non-school qualification attainment between 2006 and 2011 by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over in 2011 was at the Certificate level, where more than twice as many people (3,400 in 2006 compared with 7,000 in 2011) reported having a Certificate IV in 2011 compared with 2006.
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30-44 years in 2011 accounted for almost half (9,400) of the national increase between 2006 and 2011 in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having a non-school qualification between 2006 and 2011.

## YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT

According to the 2011 Census, there were 81,600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, an increase of 52% (28,100) from the 2006 Census. The proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over reporting a Year 12 or equivalent qualification increased from 20% in 2006 to 25% in 2011. In comparison, the proportion of non-Indigenous people aged 15 years and over who reported a Year 12 or equivalent qualification rose from 45% in 2006 to 52% in 2011.

Note that people aged 15 years and over who reported they were still in secondary school in 2011 are excluded from the following analysis as they are not expected to have completed a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

In this section, comparisons of Year 12 or equivalent attainment between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses exclude people who did not report whether they have or do not have a Year 12 or equivalent qualification. People whose Year 12 or equivalent attainment status was not stated comprised 11% of the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population aged 15 years and over in 2011, down from 12% in 2006. Caution should be used when drawing conclusions for populations with high proportions of not stated responses, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over in 2011 living in remote areas, where the unknown Year 12 or equivalent attainment status was 16% in 2011. High proportions of not stated responses limit the reliability of known responses in those populations as it is unclear how people whose Year 12 attainment status has not been stated may affect changes in educational outcomes.

### YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)(b)

	Known Year 12 or equivalent attainment status(c)		Year 12 or equivalent attainment status not stated		Total
	no.	%	no.	%	no.
2006					
<b>Remoteness Area(d)</b>					
Major Cities	76 475	89.1	9 347	10.9	85 822
Inner Regional	48 636	87.8	6 761	12.2	55 397
Outer Regional	48 155	85.5	8 184	14.5	56 339
Remote	20 079	84.3	3 747	15.7	23 826
Very Remote	38 518	89.1	4 701	10.9	43 219
<i>Total</i>	232 867	87.6	32 953	12.4	265 820
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	123 617	89.5	14 512	10.5	138 129
Female	109 250	85.6	18 441	14.4	127 691

<b>Total</b>	<b>232 867</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>32 953</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>265 820</b>
2011					
<b>Remoteness Area(d)</b>					
Major Cities	102 153	90.9	10 237	9.1	112 390
Inner Regional	61 189	88.9	7 610	11.1	68 799
Outer Regional	60 531	87.6	8 535	12.4	69 066
Remote	21 639	86.4	3 401	13.6	25 040
Very Remote	44 256	90.9	4 450	9.1	48 706
<i>Total</i>	<i>291 145</i>	<i>89.2</i>	<i>35 185</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>326 330</i>
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	137 032	87.2	20 189	12.8	157 221
Female	154 113	91.1	14 996	8.9	169 109
<b>Total</b>	<b>291 145</b>	<b>89.2</b>	<b>35 185</b>	<b>10.8</b>	<b>326 330</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.

(c) Includes people who reported they did not have a Year 12 qualification.

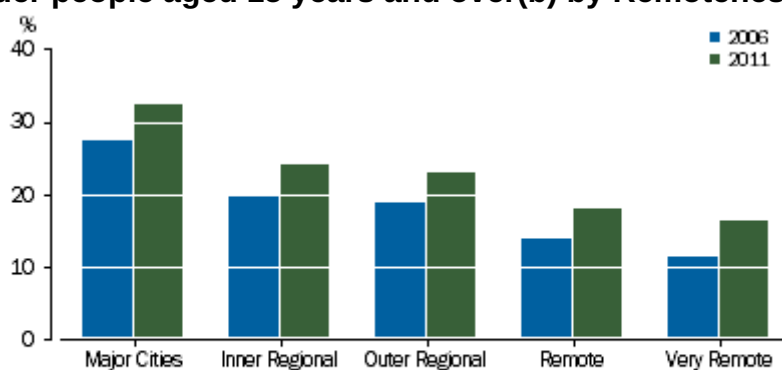
(d) Remoteness Areas are described in the Statistical Geography Fact Sheet: Remoteness Structure

Ideally, comparisons between 2006 and 2011 Year 12 or equivalent attainment outcomes should be measuring change in outcomes for the same population over time. However, the ability to accurately measure this change can potentially be masked by the unexpectedly large increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over recorded in the 2011 Census (24% or 67,400). If the people who contributed to this increase have different educational characteristics to those people who identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2006, then this may be driving the changes observed rather than real changes in Year 12 outcomes between 2006 and 2011.

### Year 12 or equivalent attainment by remoteness

Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who had attained a Year 12 or equivalent qualification increased by between four and five percentage points in each Remoteness Area.

### YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT(a), Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b) by Remoteness Area



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.

While all Remoteness Areas recorded similar percentage point increases between 2006 and

2011, the relative increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification revealed more variation across Remoteness Areas. The largest relative increase in the count of people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification occurred among those living in very remote areas (61% or 3,000), while the smallest gain was in remote areas (38% or 1,200).

While all Remoteness Areas recorded a similar percentage point increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification between 2006 and 2011, an examination of the count of people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification reveals more variation across Remoteness Areas. The largest proportional increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification occurred among people living in very remote areas (61% or 3,000), while the smallest gain was in remote areas (38% or 1,200).

#### **YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT(a), Counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(b)(c) by Remoteness Area**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>Relative change</b>		<b>Proportion of total change</b>
	no.	no.	no.	%	%
Major Cities	23 556	36 419	12 863	54.6	45.8
Inner Regional	10 954	16 551	5 597	51.1	19.9
Outer Regional	10 572	15 871	5 299	50.1	18.9
Remote	3 284	4 526	1 242	37.8	4.4
Very Remote	4 922	7 928	3 006	61.1	10.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>53 488</b>	<b>81 557</b>	<b>28 069</b>	<b>52.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>

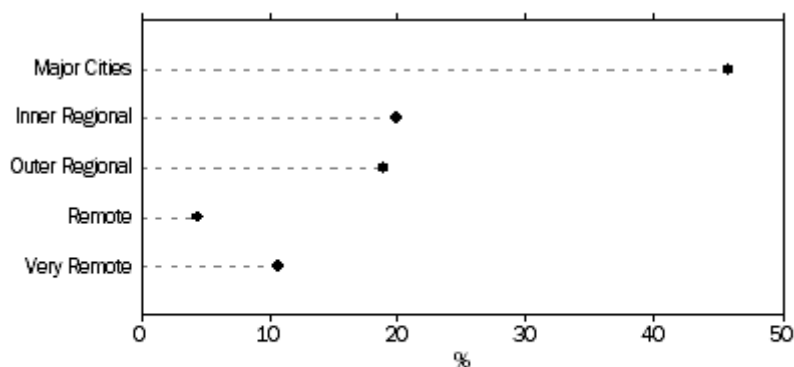
(a) Excludes Year 12 or equivalent attainment not stated.

(b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(c) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in major cities accounted for the greatest proportion (46% or 12,900) of the national increase (28,100) in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification between 2006 and 2011, followed by those living in inner regional areas (20% or 5,600) and outer regional areas (19% or 5,300).

#### **YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT, Distribution of change in counts between 2006 and 2011 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over(a)(b)**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.

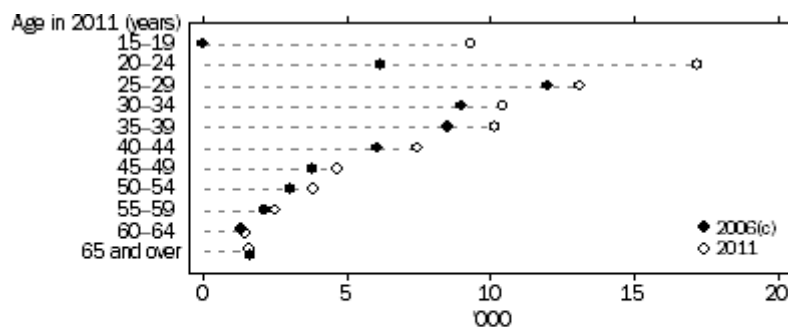
## Year 12 or equivalent attainment by age and remoteness

Changes in Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates can be quite different for people born in different years. This section looks at the changes in the Year 12 or equivalent attainment rates using age cohorts to assess whether the changes that occurred in each age group were in line with expectations. An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Changes in age cohorts for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are discussed in more detail in the chapter Changes in Age and Sex Structure.

When comparing age cohorts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, it is expected that there will be a high increase in Year 12 or equivalent attainment for people aged 15-24 years in 2011 (that is, those aged 10-19 years in 2006) as this is the age when the majority of people complete their secondary schooling. Small changes in Year 12 or equivalent attainment are expected for people aged 25-64 years in 2011, while very few people aged 65 years and over in 2011 are expected to achieve a Year 12 or equivalent qualification during this period.

In general, the contributions made by each of these three age groups to the total increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification reflected those expectations. (It should be noted that changes in age cohorts for Year 12 or equivalent attainment have not been adjusted to account for the potential impact of mortality and/or variability of the undercount and mobility between Remoteness Areas.) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-24 years in 2011 accounted for almost three-quarters (72% or 20,300) of the increase in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification. Almost all of the remainder of the increase (28% or 7,800) was contributed by those aged 25-64 years in 2011, most notably those aged 30-44 years.

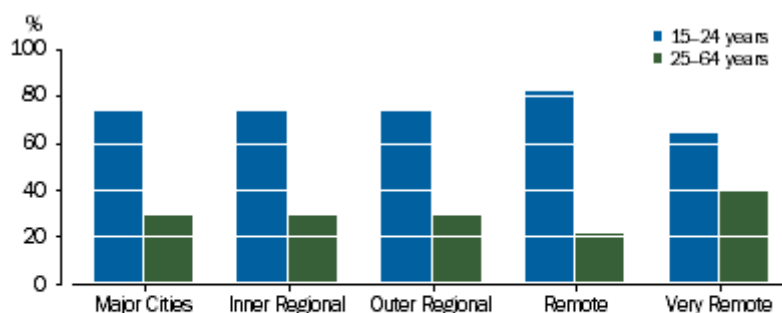
## YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT ATTAINMENT, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by age cohort in 2011(a)(b)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.  
 (c) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

Across the Remoteness Areas, there was generally a similar pattern in the distribution of the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification between the younger and older age cohorts. People aged 15-24 years in 2011 accounted for the majority of the increase in all Remoteness Areas. Their contribution was greatest in remote areas, where they made up 82% (1,000) of the extra 1,200 people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification since 2006. The contribution made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-24 years in 2011 towards the extra 3,000 people in very remote areas was relatively smaller compared with the other Remoteness Areas (64% or 1,900).

## INCREASE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT(a)(b), distribution by age cohort in 2011 and Remoteness Areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.  
 Note: Graph excludes people aged 65 years and over as this age group contributed less than 1% to the increase.

While in all Remoteness Areas the two youngest age cohorts dominated the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had completed a Year 12 or equivalent qualification, a closer examination of the individual contributions of each five-year age cohort from 25-29 years and over revealed some differences by Remoteness Area.

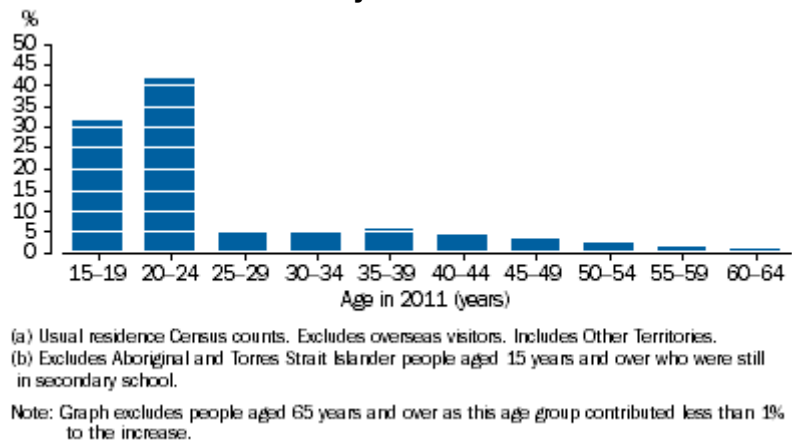
### Major cities

In major cities, there were 12,900 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2011 compared with 2006. The highest contribution to this increase after that made by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15-24 years in 2011 (73% or 9,400) came from those aged 35-39 years in 2011 (6% or 750), followed by those aged 30-34 years (5% or 630) and 25-29 years (5% or 600).



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 40-44 years in 2011 made up a further 4% (550) of the increase in major cities.

**INCREASE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT(a)(b) BETWEEN 2006 AND 2011, Distribution by age cohort in 2011, Major Cities**



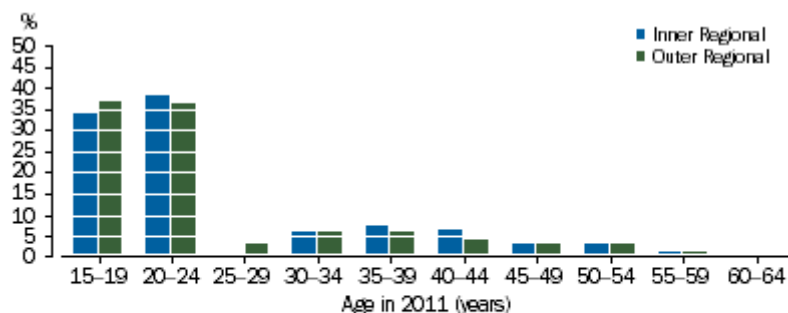
***Inner and outer regional areas***

The age cohort patterns in inner and outer regional areas was similar to major cities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification.

There were 5,600 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification in inner regional areas in 2011 compared with 2006. As in major cities, the highest contribution to this increase after that made by those aged 15-24 years in 2011 (73% or 4,100) came from those aged 35-39 years in 2011 (7% or 410).

In outer regional areas, there were 5,300 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2011 than in 2006. As in major cities and inner regional areas, the highest contribution to this increase after that made by those aged 15-24 years in 2011 (73% or 3,900) came from those aged 35-39 years in 2011 (6% or 330).

**INCREASE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT(a)(b), Distribution by age cohort in 2011, Inner and Outer Regional Areas**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.  
 Note: Graph excludes people aged 65 years and over as this age group contributed less than 1% to the increase.

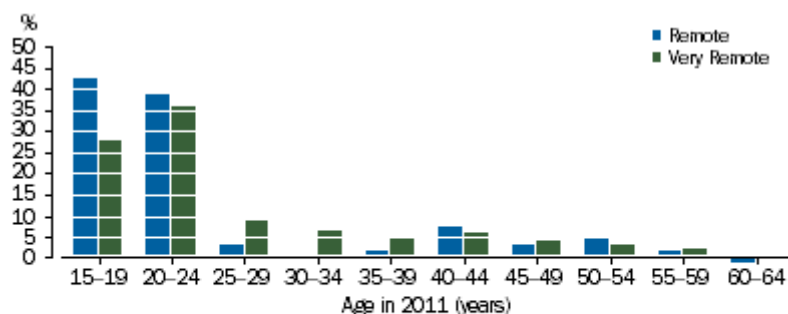
## Remote and very remote areas

There were some differences in the distribution of the increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people who had attained Year 12 or an equivalent qualification in remote and very remote areas.

In 2011 there were 1,200 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification in remote areas compared with 2006. After those aged 15-24 years in 2011, who contributed 82% (1,000) to this increase, the next highest contributors to the increase were Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 40-44 years in 2011 (7% or 90).

In very remote areas, there were 3,000 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification in 2011 than in 2006. Unlike remote areas, the highest contribution to this increase after that made by those aged 15-24 years in 2011 (64% or 1,900) was from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-29 years (9% or 270), followed by those aged 30-34 years in 2011 (6% or 190). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 40-44 years living in very remote areas contributed a similar proportion of the increase to that recorded for remote areas at 6% (170 in very remote areas and 90 in remote areas).

## INCREASE IN ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH YEAR 12 OR EQUIVALENT(a)(b), Distribution by age cohort in 2011, Remote and Very Remote Areas



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Excludes Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over who were still in secondary school.  
 Note: Graph excludes people aged 65 years and over as this age group contributed less than 1% to the increase.

## NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATIONS

As non-school qualifications are usually completed at an older age than secondary schooling, this section focuses on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over in 2011. Only a person's highest level of non-school qualification is collected in the Census. People whose level of qualification was not stated or inadequately described were included in the total calculations only.

Nationally, there were 108,100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having a non-school qualification in 2011, an increase of 37% (29,200) compared with 2006. This increase resulted in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over reporting a non-school qualification rising from 25% in 2006 to 31% in 2011.

In this section, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over whose non-school qualification attainment status was unknown were excluded from comparisons between 2006 and 2011. In 2011, people whose non-school qualification status was not stated comprised 13% of the total population of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over, down from 15% in 2006. As with Year 12 or equivalent attainment, caution should be used when drawing conclusions for populations which have high proportions of not stated responses.

### NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION ATTAINMENT STATUS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over(a)

	Known non-school qualification attainment status(c)		Non-school qualification attainment status not stated(d)		Total
	no.	%	no.	%	no.
2006					
<b>Remoteness Area</b>					
Major Cities	54 654	86.2	8 754	13.8	63 408
Inner Regional	34 787	84.9	6 179	15.1	40 966
Outer Regional	35 689	83.0	7 295	17.0	42 984
Remote	14 719	81.8	3 266	18.2	17 985
Very Remote	14 719	86.9	4 153	13.1	31 642
<i>Total</i>	<i>168 056</i>	<i>84.9</i>	<i>29 838</i>	<i>15.1</i>	<i>197 894</i>
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	77 476	83.2	15 665	16.8	93 141
Female	90 580	86.5	14 173	13.5	104 753
<b>Total</b>	<b>168 056</b>	<b>84.9</b>	<b>29 838</b>	<b>15.1</b>	<b>197 894</b>
2011					
<b>Remoteness Area</b>					
Major Cities	74 285	89.1	9 116	10.9	83 401
Inner Regional	44 867	86.9	6 764	13.1	51 631
Outer Regional	45 342	85.6	7 632	14.4	52 974
Remote	16 197	83.7	3 163	16.3	19 360
Very Remote	32 029	87.9	4 418	12.1	36 447
<i>Total</i>	<i>213 721</i>	<i>87.0</i>	<i>31 905</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>245 626</i>
<b>Sex</b>					
Male	98 692	85.0	17 354	15.0	116 046
Female	115 029	88.8	14 551	11.2	129 580
<b>Total</b>	<b>213 721</b>	<b>87.0</b>	<b>31 905</b>	<b>13.0</b>	<b>245 626</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) Includes all known categories of responses including not applicable responses.

(c) Includes people whose non-school qualification attainment status was not stated. Also includes people whose level of non-school qualification was not stated.

## Non-school qualification by level of highest qualification

There were substantial increases in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over with a non-school qualification across all levels of non-school qualification between 2006 and 2011. The largest proportional increase was at the Certificate level, where more than twice as many people reported having a Certificate IV in 2011 compared with 2006 (7,000 compared with 3,400). The lowest proportional increase was at the Bachelor degree level, with a 50% (3,800) increase in the count of people with a Bachelor degree as their highest non-school qualification.

### HIGHEST NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over(a)(b) by level of qualification

	2006	2011	Change		Proportion of total change
	no.	no.	no.	%	%
Postgraduate/Graduate(c)	2 293	3 757	1 464	63.8	5.0
Bachelor degree	7 473	11 232	3 759	50.3	12.9
Advanced Diploma/Diploma	8 028	12 426	4 398	54.8	15.0
Certificate IV	3 365	6 981	3 616	107.5	12.4
Certificate III	18 949	29 583	10 634	56.1	36.4
Certificate I or II	3 428	5 491	2 063	60.2	7.1
<b>Total(d)</b>	<b>78 876</b>	<b>108 119</b>	<b>29 243</b>	<b>37.1</b>	<b>100.0</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

(b) People whose non-school qualification attainment status was not stated are included in total population only

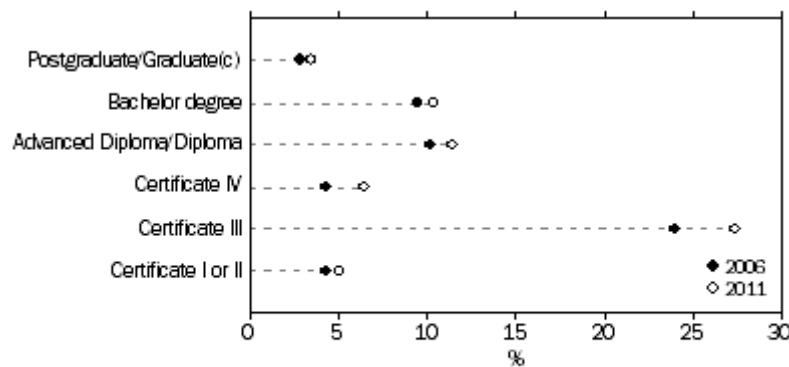
(c) Includes Postgraduate degrees and Graduate Diploma/Certificate.

(d) Includes level of qualification not stated or inadequately described, and all Certificates, not further defined,

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having a Certificate III were the biggest contributors (36% or 10,600) to the 29,200 increase in people with a non-school qualification in 2011. This was followed by people with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma (15% or 4,400), a Bachelor degree (13% or 3,800) and a Certificate IV (12% or 3,600).

There was very little change in the distribution of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people holding a non-school qualification by level of qualification. The greatest change was at the Certificate level, with a three percentage point increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reporting a Certificate III level qualification between 2006 and 2011 (to 27%), followed by a two percentage point increase for Certificate IV level (to 6%).

### DISTRIBUTION OF HIGHEST NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over(a)(b) by level of qualification(c)



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (b) Includes level of qualification not stated and inadequately described responses.  
 (c) Includes Postgraduate degrees and Graduate Diploma/Certificate.

## Non-school qualifications by age

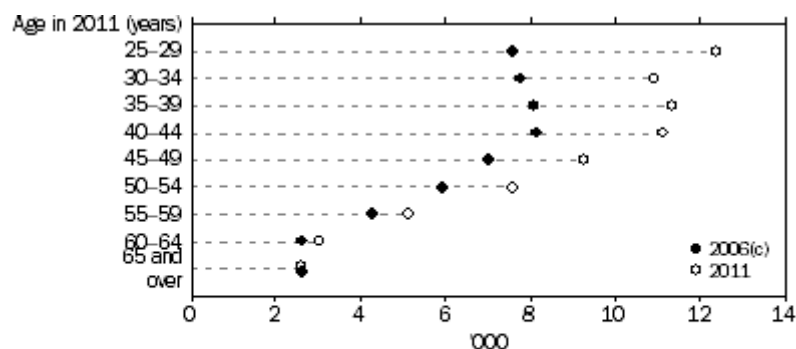
This section looks at the changes between the 2006 and 2011 Census focusing on those Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people where the level of non-school qualification is known. Changes to a highest non-school qualification can be quite different for people born in different years, and this analysis uses age cohorts to assess whether the changes that occurred in each age group were in line with expectations. An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Changes in age cohorts for the total Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population are discussed in more detail in the chapter Changes in Age and Sex Structure.

When comparing age cohorts between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, it is expected that there will be an increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-29 years in 2011 (that is, those aged 20-24 years in 2006) with a non-school qualification due to relatively high levels of participation in tertiary and vocational programs for this age group. Smaller changes are expected in older age groups as the level of participation in these programs generally declines with age.

In 2011, there were 73,500 people aged 25 years and over with a known level of non-school qualification, compared with 54,300 people aged 20 years and over with a known qualification in 2006. This represents an increase of 19,300 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a known level of non-school qualification in 2011 when compared with the same group of people in 2006 (that is, those aged 20 years and over in 2006).

People aged 25-29 years in 2011 accounted for one-quarter (25%) of the 19,300 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having a non-school qualification between 2006 and 2011. People aged 30-34 years in 2011 accounted for a further 49% of the increase, while smaller increases were observed for all remaining five-year age groups up to and including 60-64 years. While participation in non-school education can occur at any stage of life, the increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30 years and over with non-school qualifications is higher than can be explained when considering the expected mortality rates for these age groups and rates of mature-age education. (It should be noted that the change in each age group has not been adjusted to account for any changes that might be expected due to mortality and/or variability of the undercount and mobility.)

## HIGHEST NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION(a), Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people by age cohort in 2011(b)

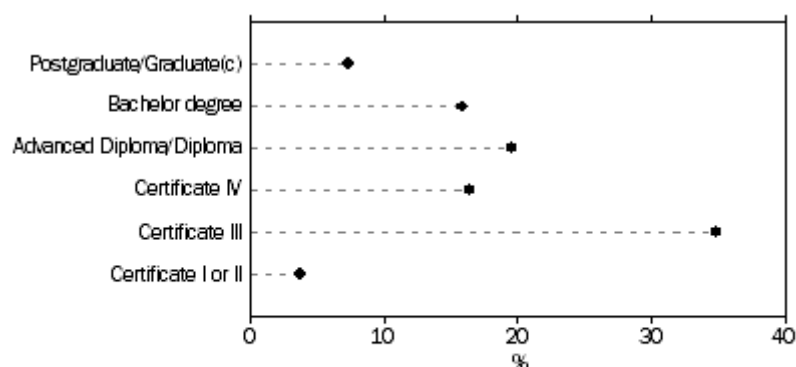


(a) Excludes level of qualification not stated or inadequately described.  
 (b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (c) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

## Non-school qualifications by level of highest qualification

The increase in counts of people who reported a non-school qualification varied by level of qualification. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having Certificate III as their highest qualification in 2011 accounted for over one-third (35%) of the 19,300 increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with a non-school qualification between 2006 and 2011. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people with Advanced Diploma and Diploma qualifications made up a further 20% of the increase, while those with Bachelor degrees accounted for 16% of the increase, and those with Graduate or Postgraduate qualifications contributed a further 7%.

### HIGHEST LEVEL OF NON-SCHOOL QUALIFICATION(a), Distribution of change in counts between 2006 and 2011 for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over(b) by age in 2011



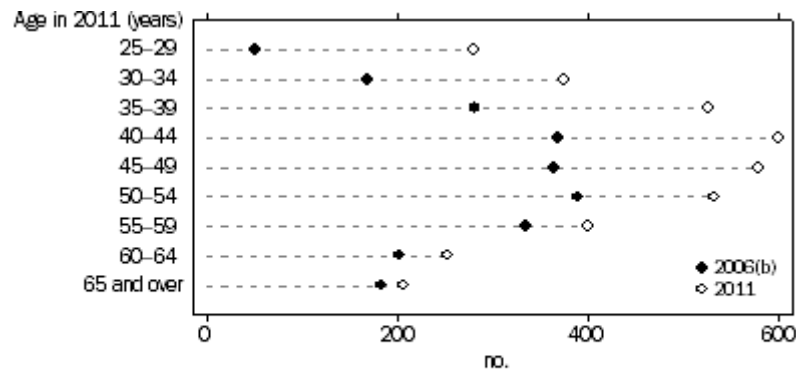
(a) Excludes level of qualification not stated or inadequately described.  
 (b) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
 (c) Includes Postgraduate degrees and Graduate Diploma/Certificate.

## Postgraduate degree or Graduate Diploma/Graduate Certificate

In 2011, 1,400 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over reported having a Postgraduate degree or Graduate Diploma/Certificate than in 2006. Among those aged 25-64 years in 2011, there were similarly high rates of increase in the counts of people with a Postgraduate degree or Graduate Diploma/Certificate for each age group up to 50 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-29 years accounted for 17% of the increase, similar to the proportions contributed by those aged 30-34 years (15%) and 35-39 years (18%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people

aged 50-64 years accounted for a further 19% of the increase.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH A POSTGRADUATE OR GRADUATE DIPLOMA/CERTIFICATE(a), by age cohort in 2011**

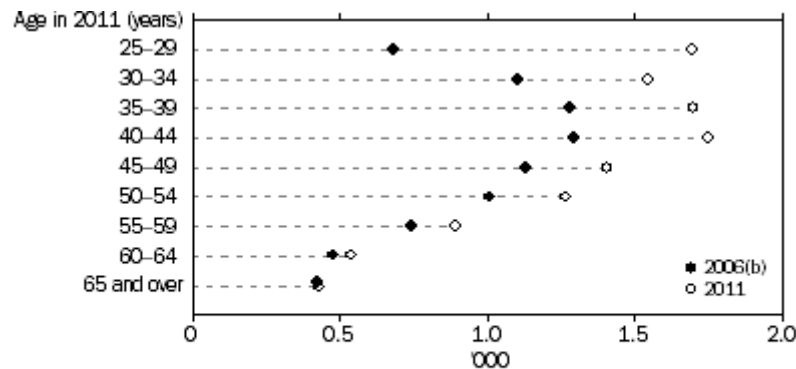


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

**Bachelor degree**

Around 3,100 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over reported having a Bachelor degree in 2011 than in 2006. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, one-third (33%) of the increase in the count of people who reported having a Bachelor degree was from those aged 25-29 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30-34 years, 35-39 years and 40-44 years also showed high rates of increase and together accounted for 43% of the increase among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 45-54 years accounted for a further 17% of the increase.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH A BACHELOR DEGREE(a), by age cohort in 2011**



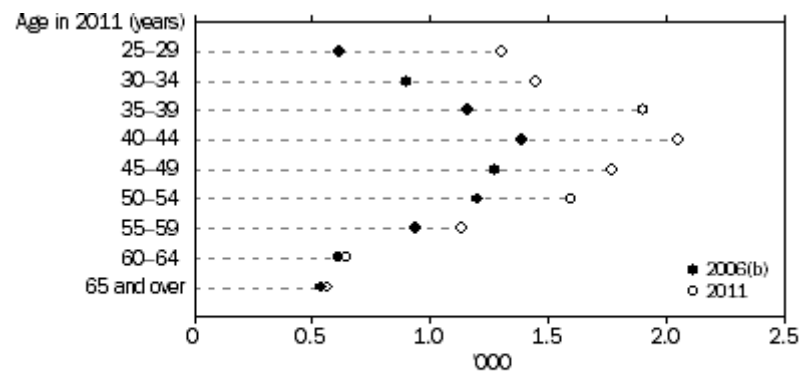
(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

**Advanced Diploma or Diploma**

There was an increase of 3,800 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported they had an Advanced Diploma or Diploma qualification from 2006 to 2011. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, those

aged 35-39 years accounted for 20% of the total increase in the count of people with an Advanced Diploma or Diploma qualification, followed by those aged 25-29 years and 40-44 years (both 18%).

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH AN AN ADVANCED DIPLOMA/DIPLOMA(a), by age cohort in 2011**

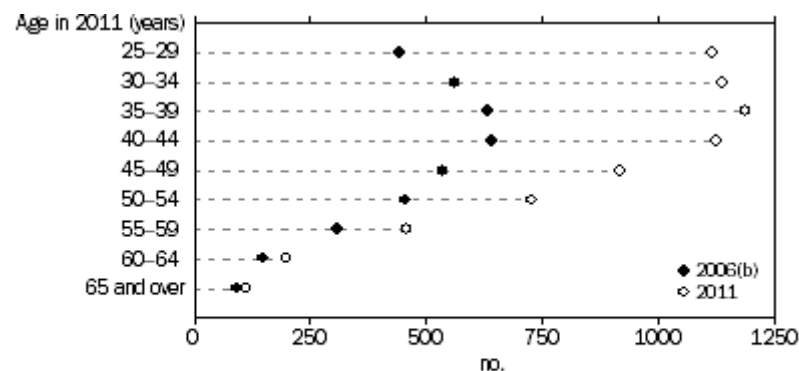


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

**Certificate IV**

Around 3,200 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over reported having a Certificate IV qualification in 2011 than in 2006. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, those aged 25-29 years accounted for 21% of the total increase in the count of people with a Certificate IV qualification, closely followed by those aged 30-34 years and 35-39 years (both 18%). While the size of the increase declined with age, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 40-49 years accounted for a further 28% of the increase.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH A CERTIFICATE IV(a), by age cohort in 2011**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

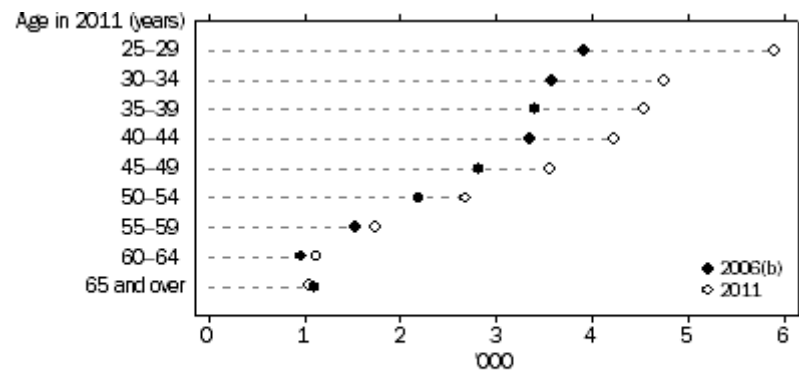
**Certificate III**

There was an increase of 6,700 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over who reported having a Certificate III qualification between 2006 and 2011. Among



Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, 29% of the total increase in the count of people with a Certificate III qualification was from those aged 25-29 years. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 30-39 years accounted for about one-third (34%) of the increase, while 24% of the increase was from those aged 40-49 years.

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH A CERTIFICATE III(a), by age cohort in 2011**

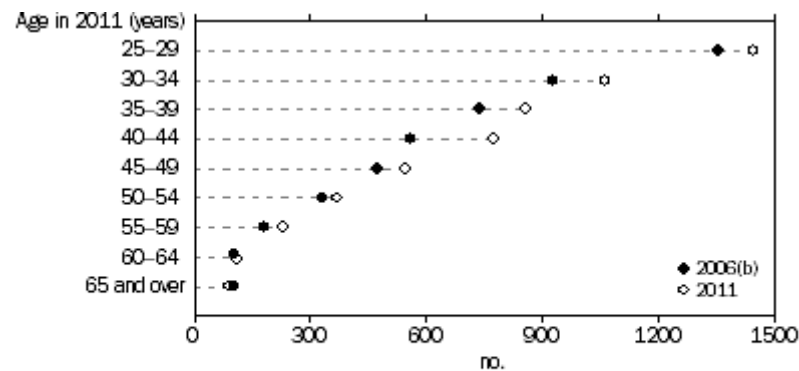


(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

**Certificate I or II**

Around 700 more Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25 years and over reported having a Certificate I or II qualification in 2011 than in 2006. Among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-64 years in 2011, the highest proportion of the total increase in the count of people with a Certificate I or II qualification was among those aged 40-44 years (30%). Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 25-29 years accounted for a much lower proportion of the total increase (13%), similar to the proportion contributed by those aged 45-49 years (10%).

**ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLE WITH A CERTIFICATE I OR II(a), by age cohort in 2011**



(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.  
(b) Figures for 2006 are for age groups five years younger than in 2011 (for example, 85 years and over in 2011 is 80 years and over in 2006).

**CONCLUDING REMARKS**

People with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification have a greater likelihood of continuing with further study as well as entering into the workforce. This chapter shows there was an overall increase in secondary and non-school educational attainment among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over between 2006 and 2011. The increase in Year 12 or higher qualifications among older age cohorts supports the premise that the increased propensity to identify as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin between 2006 and 2011 has impacted on educational outcomes for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **1. How large was the increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011?**

There was a 21%, or 93,300, increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the Census between 2006 and 2011. While Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have been increasing since 1971, this increase was the largest since 1991-1996 when Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people increased by 33%.

#### **2. Where was most of the increase?**

The vast majority (90% or 83,100) of the 93,300 increase in the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 occurred in non-remote areas, with just over two-thirds (67% or 62,400) of the increase occurring in New South Wales and Queensland.

#### **3. What was the reason for the large increase in the counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011?**

Births, deaths and overseas migration accounted for over two-thirds (70% or 65,500) of the additional 93,300 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the 2011 Census. This means that most of the increase can be explained by measurable demographic factors of population change.

#### **4. What are the other reasons for the increase?**

The remaining 30% (27,800 people) of the total increase in the Census count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was the result of a range of factors including improvements to Census enumeration and a decrease in the number of Census records with an unknown Indigenous status. The analysis in this publication suggests that the most significant factor was a change in the way some people reported their Indigenous status between 2006 and 2011, resulting in them identifying themselves and (if they had children) their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census but not in the 2006 Census.

#### **5. Why is it important to understand the increase in counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011?**

Large increases in Census counts require careful consideration to assess if any changes

observed in the characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the result of an increase in number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted, or an actual outcome for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identified in the previous Census. Similarly, a large increase in the Census counts could mask actual change in characteristics for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people identified in the previous Census.

## **6. Do the characteristics of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people counted in the 2011 Census differ from those counted in 2006?**

Comparisons of the Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2006 and 2011 suggest there has been little change in selected characteristics, such as the proportion of people living in each Remoteness Area, fertility rates and labour force outcomes.

The most significant differences between 2006 and 2011 in the characteristics examined in this publication were an increase in the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 15 years and over with a Year 12 or equivalent qualification (up from 20% to 25%) and an increase in the proportion of those aged 25 years and over with a non-school qualification (up from 25% to 31%).

## **7. Can I compare 2011 Census data with 2006 Census data for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people?**

Yes. Census data from 2006 and 2011 represent the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples at each point in time.

However, as the count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people was much larger in 2011 than in 2006, any change in socio-economic characteristics should not be assumed to reflect an outcome for the population identified in 2006. Caution should be exercised when comparing rates calculated using 2006 data and 2011 data (for example, the Year 12 attainment rate or labour force participation rate), and when constructing analysis based on small area or small sub-populations.

## **8. Where can I go for more information about how the data were collected?**

For information about how the ABS takes a Census, refer to *How Australia Takes a Census* (cat. no. 2903.0).

For estimates of net undercount for the 2011 Census, as well as details about how the estimates have been calculated, refer to *Census of Population and Housing - Details of Undercount, 2011* (cat. no. 2940.0).

For estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at 30 June 2011 for various geographies, refer to *Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011* (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001).

## **About this Release**

This publication examines the issues underlying the change in Census counts for people identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin from the 2006 Census to 2011 Census and attempts to quantify elements of this increase. It provides an analysis of key

demographic factors and selected characteristics that highlight the scope and implications of the increased population count to assist policy makers, researchers and other data users to understand and assess the impact of this change.

# Explanatory Notes

## Explanatory Notes

### EXPLANATORY NOTES

#### INTRODUCTION

**1** This publication presents counts from the 2011 Census of Population and Housing for people who both identified as being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin and were counted in the Census.

**2** The 2011 Census of Population and Housing was held on 9 August 2011. The objective of the Census is to accurately measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia and the dwellings in which they live, on Census Night. This provides a reliable basis for the estimation of the population of each of the states, territories and local government areas primarily for electoral purposes and the distribution of government funds. It also provides information about the characteristics of the population and its housing within small geographic areas and for small population groups. Census data supports a range of planning, administration, policy development and evaluation activities of government and other data users.

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS

**3** The question about Indigenous status on the Census form asks whether each person is of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin. The Commonwealth definition of an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander person is:

- a person of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent who;
- identifies as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin and who is;
- accepted as such by the community with which the person associates.

**4** The 1996 Census was the first Census to allow people's origins to be recorded as both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander; prior to this, only one or the other could be recorded. This question format is the Standard Indigenous Question and has been repeated in subsequent Censuses, including the 2011 Census.

**5** For more information on definitional changes and Census questions, refer to the Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

#### SCOPE AND COVERAGE

**6** The 2011 Census of Population and Housing was held on 9 August 2011. Australia's first national Census was held in 1911 and since 1961 a Census has been taken every five years, the frequency specified in the **Census and Statistics Act (1905)**.

**7** Following changes to the Australian Constitution as a result of the 1967 Referendum, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were included in official estimates of the Australian population. As a consequence, from the 1976 Census onwards, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed and improved strategies to count the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population throughout Australia.

**8** The Census aims to count every person who spent Census Night in Australia. This includes Australian residents in Antarctica and Other Territories - Jervis Bay, Cocos (Keeling) Islands and Christmas Island. The other Australian External Territories (Norfolk Island and minor islands such as Heard and McDonald Islands) are outside the scope of the Australian Census. The only people who are excluded from the Census are foreign diplomats and their families.

**9** The Census includes people on vessels in or between Australian ports as well as people on board long distance trains, buses or aircraft. Also included are those people outside Australia who are not required to undertake migration formalities, such as those on oil and gas rigs or on Australian Antarctic bases. People entering Australia before midnight on Census Night are counted, while people leaving an Australian port for an overseas destination before midnight on Census Night are not. Visitors to Australia are included regardless of how long they have been in the country or how long they plan to stay. However, for people who intend to be in Australia for less than 12 months, only basic demographic data are available. The Census includes homeless people and people camping out.

**10** All occupied dwellings are counted in the Census with the exception of diplomatic dwellings. Unoccupied private dwellings are also counted, with the exception of unoccupied dwellings in caravan parks, marinas and manufactured home estates (self-contained dwellings that are built off-site and then transported to the estate for installation). Unoccupied residences of owners, managers or caretakers of such establishments are counted.

**11** Census counts are not adjusted for undercount (that is, people missed in the Census) and overcount (people counted more than once in the Census). It is likely that some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, particularly those aged 15-24 years, may have been missed in the 2006 Census but counted in the 2011 Census, and vice versa. Although the Post Enumeration Survey (PES) illustrated the net undercount for both Censuses by broad demographic features, it is not possible to produce detailed estimates of the net undercount for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. As a result, the effect of undercount has been ignored when making comparisons between the two Censuses, though referenced where it was likely to be most acute.

## **ENUMERATION PROCEDURES**

**12** In order to achieve the most accurate count of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Census, the ABS developed an Indigenous Enumeration Strategy. This Strategy was first introduced in the 1976 Census for remote areas of WA and NT, and has been expanded and improved for subsequent Censuses. The strategy aims to be culturally appropriate and to raise the quality of the Census counts for this population group.

**13** The 2011 Census Indigenous Enumeration Strategy incorporated improvements to enumeration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in urban areas, as well as those living in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. At a broad level, the improvements for the 2011 Census included:

- earlier and ongoing engagement
- a reduction in the overall enumeration period for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities
- an increase in the number of field staff recruited
- a greater level of support to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people requiring assistance in completing their form, in both urban and remote areas.

**14** In most discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, an interview approach was used, with many local people employed and trained to conduct or facilitate the interviews.

**15** In pre-identified urban areas increased support and assistance were provided to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, including the option of collecting Census information through an interview.

**16** For more information on the Indigenous Enumeration Strategy refer to 2011 Census Fact sheet Enumeration Procedures for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples available on the ABS website.

## **LIMITATIONS OF CENSUS DATA**

**17** There are four principal sources of error in Census data: respondent error, processing error, partial response and undercount. Quality assurance processes in the Census program aim to reduce error as much as possible, and to provide a measure of the remaining error to data users, to allow them to use the data in an informed way.

**18** The Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0) provides more information on managing Census data quality.

## **DATA PRESENTATIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

**19** The proportions of the population shown in the tables in this publication include 'not stated' responses in the denominator. For example, the proportion of people in Australia who are of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin is calculated by dividing the number of persons identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin by the total population in the Census, and expressing the result as a percentage. The 'total population' includes records coded to 'not stated'.

**20** The Census counts presented in this publication are based on usual residence. For information on usual residence and place of enumeration refer to the Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

**21** Under the **Census and Statistics Act (1905)** it is an offence to release any information collected under the Act that is likely to enable identification of any particular individual or organisation. Care is taken in the specification of tables to minimise the risk of identifying individuals. In addition, a technique has been developed to randomly adjust cell values. Random adjustment of the data is considered to be the most satisfactory technique for avoiding the release of Census data that may identify individuals. When the technique is applied, all cells are adjusted to prevent any such data being exposed. These adjustments result in small introduced random errors. However, the information value of the table as a whole is not impaired. For more detail refer to introduced random error in the Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

**22** Various analyses in this publication attempt to track age cohorts over time to assess whether the changes that occurred in each cohort were in line with expectations. This is generally done by following selected age groups of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people back in time (for example, from 2011 back to 2006) using age cohorts. In the case of total fertility rates, it is done by following Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women aged 45-49 years from an earlier period forward to a later period using age cohorts. An age cohort is a group of people with the same birth year within a defined period (for example, people aged 30-34 years in 2011 were aged 25-29 years in 2006). Mortality and mobility have not been taken into account in the age cohort analyses. Changes in age cohorts are discussed in more detail in *Changes in Age and Sex Structure*.

**23** In 2011, almost half (48%) of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people reported living at a different address five years ago, and some of this mobility would have resulted in them living in a different Remoteness Area. However, there are technical challenges to be overcome in coding a person's usual residence five years ago to a Remoteness Area. While this presents a limitation in the analysis provided in *Changes in Distribution of Census Counts by Remoteness*, the analysis is still considered to be informative.

## **MEASURES OF FERTILITY AND MATCHING CHILDREN TO MOTHERS**

**24** Total fertility rate (TFR) is the most commonly used summary measure of fertility. The TFR is the sum of age-specific fertility rates (live births at each age of mother per 1,000 of the estimated female population of the same age), which represents the number of children a female could expect to bear during her lifetime if she experienced current age-specific fertility rates at each age of her reproductive life.

**25** There are several approaches to estimating levels and trends of TFRs. For example, it is possible to use the birth registrations data as published annually in *Births, Australia* (cat. no. 3301.0), or apply the own-children method to Census data to estimate fertility rates 15 years prior to the Census.<sup>1</sup> The own-children method is a Census-based reverse survival technique which matches children to mothers in households, classified by age of child and mother, to produce estimates of: (a) births by age of mother; and (b) number of women by age in the years prior to the Census. Reverse survival methods used to produce backcasted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates use data from life tables (of which the 2010-2012 life tables will be released on 15 November 2013). These estimates are then used to produce age-specific birth rates for the years between Censuses.

**26** Caution is advised, as estimates derived from both birth registrations data and the own-children method have known limitations, which are particularly challenging for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. Estimated fertility using birth registrations data may underestimate the fertility level of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women because some births of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not reported and recorded as such when they are registered - for further information refer to *Births, Australia* ([cat. no. 3301.0](#)). In applying the own-children method, not all children can be matched with their biological mothers and so two assumptions are used: (a) for non-matched children, the proportion of them belonging to non-Indigenous mothers is assumed to be the same as for those of matched 'own-children'; and (b) the age distribution of non-matched mothers is the same as that for matched mothers. The choice of a life table is also very important. As a result of these limitations, there is considerable uncertainty associated with estimated levels of fertility and it is more appropriate to examine the trends of fertility over time rather than fertility figures at a point of time.

**27** The Family-Tree method is an extension of the own-children method.<sup>2</sup> It appends

information of parents and/or grandparents and/or spouse, where applicable, to each individual record. Since the family household is defined in Census based on couple and parental relationships, it is possible to append information of 'social' parentage rather than biological links. When matching mothers with their biological children, these refined procedures can match, on average, about 5% more children to their mothers than the own-children method. It is important to note that the Family-Tree method involves constructing connections between individuals within Census data, and does not involve any genealogical (or 'family history') methodology.

**28** According to Births, Australia, 2011 (cat. no. 3301.0), from 2006 to 2011, about 71-73% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders babies were born to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander mothers. This rate is higher than that obtained from the Family-Tree method using Census data (68% for children aged less than one year in 2006 and 67% in 2011). This might be an indication that some parents did not identify their child as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person in the Census but did so in the birth registration.

## **POPULATION ESTIMATES**

**29** Estimated Resident Population (ERP) is the official measure of the population of Australia. It is based on the concept of usual residence. It refers to all people, regardless of nationality, citizenship or legal status, who usually live in Australia, with the exception of foreign diplomatic personnel and their families. It includes usual residents who are overseas for less than 12 months. It excludes overseas visitors who are in Australia for less than 12 months. In the compilation of the ERP, important adjustments are made to the Census count based on place of usual residence. For further information about ERP, see Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0).

**30** The ABS is undertaking a program of work based on results of the 2011 Census of Population and Housing and the 2011 Census Post Enumeration Survey (PES) to compile and release estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at 30 June 2011. Preliminary estimates at 30 June 2011 are available in Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0) from the March quarter 2012 issue (released on 27 September 2012) onwards. These preliminary estimates are published by five year age groups, sex and state/territory of usual residence. Further disaggregation will be available when the final estimates of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population at 30 June 2011 are published in Estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, June 2011 (cat. no. 3238.0.55.001).

**31** For further information regarding this work program see Information Paper: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Demographic Statistics Work Program and Release Plans, Apr 2012 (cat. no. 3238.0.55.003).

## **RELATED INFORMATION**

**32** Additional information on data quality in the 2011 Census is available on the ABS website and the Census portal. Specific information on non-response rates, and conceptual and data issues can also be found on the Census portal.

**33** Information on the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander births data is available in Births, Australia (cat. no. 3301.0).

**34** Information on the quality of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander deaths data is available in Deaths, Australia (cat. no. 3302.0).



## FOOTNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cho, Lee-Jay; Retherford Robert and Minja Kim Choe. (1986). *The Own-Children Method of Fertility Estimation*. University of Hawaii Press.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang, Guangyu and Campbell, Paul (2012). 'Developing a Family-Tree method to maximise the use of Census data' Paper presented at the 16th Biennial Conference of the Australian Population Association, 5-7 December, Melbourne.

## Quality Declaration

### Institutional environment

For information on the institutional environment of the ABS, including the legislative obligations of the ABS, financing and governance arrangements, and mechanisms for scrutiny of ABS operations, please see ABS Institutional Environment.

### Relevance

The Australian Census of Population and Housing is the official count of population and dwellings and collects details of age, sex and other characteristics of the population.

The Census aims to measure the number and key characteristics of people in Australia on Census Night. All people in Australia on Census Night are in scope, except foreign diplomats and their families. Visitors to Australia are counted regardless of how long they have been in the country or how long they plan to stay. Australian residents not in the country on Census Night are out of scope of the Census.

Topics collected by the Census change from time to time. There must be a demonstrated national need for Census data for policy development, planning and program monitoring. Details on the changing content of Censuses from 1911 to 2011 can be found in Appendix 4 of *How Australia Takes a Census* (cat. no. 2903.0). A copy of the 2011 Census Household Form is included in the Appendix to the *2011 Census Dictionary* (cat. no. 2901.0).

Minimal changes were made to the 2011 Census questions, however there were some major changes in some of the classifications used. The largest of these is the change around geographical units used to output Census data. The Australian Statistical Geography Standard (ASGS) will be used for the 2011 Census for the first time. Other revised classifications have been used for the coding of occupation, industry, cultural and ethnic groups, language, religion and countries. For more detail see the *2011 Census Dictionary* (cat. no. 2901.0) entry What's new for 2011?

### Timeliness

*The Census and Statistics Act 1905* requires the Australian Statistician to conduct a Census on a regular basis. Since 1961, a Census has been held every 5 years. The 2011 Census was the 16th national Census, and marked the centenary of national Censuses in Australia. It was held on 9 August 2011.

For the 2011 Census, first release data will be available on the ABS website on 21 June 2012, and second release data on 30 October 2012. Third release data will be available on 28 March 2013, with products released progressively until the end of 2013.

### **Accuracy**

The ABS aims to produce high quality data from the Census. To achieve this, extensive effort is put into Census form design, collection procedures and processing. There are four principal sources of error in Census data which quality management aims to reduce as much as possible; they are respondent error, processing error, partial or non-response and undercount. For more detail, see *2011 Census Dictionary* (cat. no. 2901.0) entry Managing Census Quality.

The Census is self-enumerated, and respondents sometimes do not return a Census form or fail to answer every applicable question. Persons are imputed into dwellings for which no form was returned, together with some demographic characteristics for these people. These same demographic characteristics are imputed if not provided by respondents on a returned form. However, the majority of output classifications include a 'Not Stated' category to record the level of non-response for that data item. Data quality statements are produced for each Census data item and include the non-response rate for each variable and a brief outline of any known data quality problems. These can be accessed through the Data quality statements. Fact sheets comparing non-response rates over the past two Censuses are also available, see Fact sheets.

### **Coherence**

It is important for Census data to be comparable and compatible with previous Censuses and also with other data produced by the ABS and wider community. The ABS, and the Census, uses Australian standard classifications, where available and appropriate, to provide data comparability across statistical collections. These include, for example, standards for occupation and geographic areas. For more details regarding classifications used in the Census, see the *2011 Census Dictionary* (cat. no. 2901.0) entry About Census Classifications, and the relevant entries for each classification.

### **Interpretability**

The Census provides a wealth of data about the Australian community through a suite of standard products and data customised for individual requirements. The 2011 Census Dictionary (cat. no. 2901.0) is a comprehensive reference guide designed to assist users to determine and specify their data requirements, and to understand the concepts underlying the data. It provides details of classifications used and a glossary of definitions of Census terms.

A number of other resources can be accessed from the Data quality page, including Data quality statements, Non-response rates and Fact sheets.

### **Accessibility**

An extensive range of online products are available on the [Data & Analysis](#) page.

If the Census information you require is not available as a standard product or service, then ABS Consultancy Services can help you with customised services to suit your needs. Contact **1300 135 070** from within Australia or **+61 2 9268 4909** from overseas for all your Census and other information needs. Alternatively, please email [client.services@abs.gov.au](mailto:client.services@abs.gov.au).

## **Measuring change in population estimates of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples (Technical Note)**

# TECHNICAL NOTE 1 MEASURING CHANGE IN POPULATION ESTIMATES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

## POPULATION ESTIMATES

**1** While each Census aims to count everyone in Australia on Census night, the size and scale of the data collection process make it inevitable that some people will be counted more than once, and some will not be counted at all. The combined effect of this is measured by the Post Enumeration Survey (PES), which historically always indicates that there has been a net undercount (that is, more people were missed than were counted more than once).

**2** An adjustment for the net undercount and other factors is applied to the Census counts to produce population estimates. This adjustment process is particularly important for producing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates, because the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people not counted in the Census is considerably higher than the number who are counted more than once, resulting in a relatively large net undercount.

**3** The importance of changes in undercount is such that the analysis in this Technical Note specifically includes a population-estimates based analysis of the change in Census counts. The analysis mirrors that presented in Measuring Changes in Population between Censuses, but population estimates, not Census counts, are analysed. This provides a basis for also assessing the proportion of change that can reasonably be attributed to undercoverage and changes to PES methodology.

For the analysis of change in population estimates the following framework has been used:

<p>Population estimate 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>+ births registered between Census 1 and Census 2</li><li>- deaths registered between Census 1 and Census 2</li><li>+/- net migration between Census 1 and Census 2</li><li>+/- the impact of measurable changes in Post Enumeration Survey (PES) methodology</li><li>+/- the impact of measurable changes in Census coverage</li><li>+/- the impact of factors which cannot be explained by measurable components of population change or changes in methodology or coverage</li></ul> <p>= Population estimate 2</p>
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## MEASURABLE COMPONENTS OF CHANGE IN POPULATION ESTIMATES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

### Demographic factors

**4** Analysis of the change in Census counts is limited by the fact that, unlike population estimates, adjustments are not made for undercount and any other factors (such as people temporarily overseas on Census night). For more detailed information about these adjustments, refer to Australian Demographic Statistics (cat. no. 3101.0). For this reason, population estimates are considered to be a more accurate reflection of the population than Census counts, and provide a more complete picture of 'explainable' change.

**5** Change attributable to demographic factors is presented here using estimated resident

population (ERP) figures. It is important to note the data used in this analysis is based on registered births and deaths, rather than projected births and deaths. For more information, see the chapter Measuring Changes in Population between Censuses.

**6** Analysis of the 'demographic' components of change in the estimated resident population reveals that a smaller percentage of the change observed in the population estimate of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011 is attributable to births, deaths and migration than was reflected in the analysis of the change in Census counts. This highlights the contribution of changes in Census undercount and the methodology used to measure undercount between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, which are explored further in this chapter. It also reflects a change in the size of the adjustment for residents temporarily overseas which, given the relatively small impact, is not separately identified within this analysis.

### CHANGE DUE TO DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population, 2006-2011

	Population estimate		Relative change					Relative change due to demographic factors	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		Natural increase(a)	Overseas migration	Interstate migration	2006-2011	
	no.	no.	no.	%	2006-2011 no.	2006-2011 no.	2006-2011 no.	no.	%
New South Wales	152 685	208 476	55 791	36.5	18 056	411	-1 996	16 471	29.5
Victoria	33 517	47 333	13 816	41.2	4 629	174	833	5 636	40.8
Queensland	144 885	188 954	44 069	30.4	20 360	435	1 212	22 007	49.9
South Australia	28 055	37 408	9 353	33.3	3 732	57	326	4 115	44.0
Western Australia	70 966	88 270	17 304	24.4	9 356	172	294	9 822	56.8
Tasmania	18 415	24 165	5 750	31.2	1 810	37	-51	1 796	31.2
Northern Territory	64 005	68 850	4 845	7.6	5 582	44	-793	4 833	99.8
Australian Capital Territory	4 282	6 160	1 878	43.9	618	45	150	813	43.3
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>517 043</b>	<b>669 881</b>	<b>152 838</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>64 160</b>	<b>1 375</b>	<b>..</b>	<b>65 535</b>	<b>42.9</b>

(a) Registered births minus registered deaths.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

### Changes in Census undercount and the method used to calculate undercount

**7** Applying estimates of net undercount from the PES to the Census counts is a major part of the calculation of the estimated resident population. While the above analysis of population change components provides important insight into the increase between the 2006 and 2011 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population estimates, it is essential that any change analysis includes an estimate of the change in undercount over this period. It is also important to consider any measurable impact of a change in PES methodology, which will affect the comparability of undercount estimates over time.

**8** Two key changes were made to the 2011 PES methodology which had an impact on the comparability of 2006 and 2011 net undercount figures for the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population. The first of these changes was an improvement in the collection of

Indigenous status in the PES and is likely to have had the greatest impact. A household-level question (used in 2006) was replaced with a person-level question in the 2011 PES. This meant that the Indigenous status question was collected for everyone in the dwelling on a person by person basis, resulting in identification in the 2011 PES that was more closely aligned with that in the Census. For more information on this change, refer to Technical Note 1: Improvement in Collection of Indigenous Status in Census of Population and Housing - Details of Undercount, 2011 (cat. no. 2940.0). Had this improved methodology been available in 2006, it is estimated that the net undercount of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2006 would have been much higher than the published 11.5%, and likely higher than the 2011 net undercount of 17.2%.

**9** The second methodological change in the 2011 PES was the introduction of Automated Data Linking, which significantly improved the PES linking and matching methodology and, consequently, the net undercount estimates. If it had been possible to better match PES and Census records for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in 2006, this methodological change would have resulted in a small decrease in the net undercount in 2006, a small offset to the larger impact from the change in identification.

**10** The challenge with estimating these impacts is the need to involve assumptions. Some assumptions have been required, given there is no possibility of repeating the collection of Indigenous status for the Census population in 2006, or of undertaking the linking and matching of 2006 PES and Census records since name and address information is destroyed at the conclusion of Census processing. This means that the ABS has produced its 'best estimate' of what the impact would have been in 2006, using the relationship in available data for the 2006 PES and 2011 PES. For this reason, these estimates should be considered illustrative of the impact of the change in PES methodology.

**11** Almost one-quarter (23% or 35,600) of the 152,800 increase in the estimated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population can be explained by changes in PES methodology, with a further 13% (19,500) reflecting an illustrative estimate of the change in the 'actual' Census undercount between 2006 and 2011. The combined effect of these changes was a net increase of 55,100 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011, which accounts for 36% of the increase in the population estimates between 2006 and 2011.

#### CHANGE IN POPULATION ESTIMATES ATTRIBUTABLE TO CHANGES IN CENSUS UNDERCOUNT AND METHOD USED TO CALCULATE UNDERCOUNT, 2006-2011

	Population estimate		Relative change		Changes to PES methodology		Other changes in undercount		Relative change due to methodology and undercount	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		(a)		(b)		2006-2011	
	no.	no.	no.	%	no.		no.		no.	%
New South Wales	152 685	208 476	55 791	36.5	13 596		6 551		20 147	36.1
Victoria	33 517	47 333	13 816	41.2	3 810		1 805		5 615	40.6
Queensland	144 885	188 954	44 069	30.4	8 918		5 693		14 611	33.2
South Australia	28 055	37 408	9 353	33.3	3 198		1 068		4 266	45.6
Western Australia	70 966	88 270	17 304	24.4	3 036		2 744		5 780	33.4
Tasmania	18 415	24 165	5 750	31.2	2 123		638		2 761	48.0
Northern Territory	64 005	68 850	4 845	7.6	726		636		1 362	28.1
Australian Capital Territory	4 282	6 160	1 878	43.9	284		224		508	27.1

<b>Australia(c)</b>	<b>517 043669 881 152 838</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>35 608</b>	<b>19 451</b>	<b>55 059</b>	<b>36.0</b>
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(a) Estimated net impact of measurable changes to Post Enumeration Survey (PES) methodology (that is, improved collection of Indigenous status and the introduction of Automated Data Linking).

(b) Estimated change in undercount excluding the estimated impact of changes to PES methodology.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## ERROR OF CLOSURE - POPULATION ESTIMATES OF ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER PEOPLES

**12** Three-quarters (120,600) of the 152,700 increase in the estimated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population between 2006 and 2011 can be attributed to known and measurable sources of population change, as well as the estimated impact of changes to PES methodology and Census coverage. The residual portion of the increase (32,200 people) represents 4.8% of the 2011 estimated resident population, slightly lower than the 6.1% error of closure observed when looking at the change in Census counts.

### ERROR OF CLOSURE FOR ESTIMATED RESIDENT POPULATION, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, 2006-2011

	Population estimate		Relative change		Total explainable increase(a)		Error of closure	
	2006	2011	2006-2011		2006-2011			
	no.	no.	no.	%	no.	%	no.	%
New South Wales	152 685	208 476	55 791	36.5	36 618	65.6	19 173	9.2
Victoria	33 517	47 333	13 816	41.2	11 251	81.4	2 565	5.4
Queensland	144 885	188 954	44 069	30.4	36 618	83.1	7 451	3.9
South Australia	28 055	37 408	9 353	33.3	8 381	89.6	972	2.6
Western Australia	70 966	88 270	17 304	24.4	15 602	90.2	1 702	1.9
Tasmania	18 415	24 165	5 750	31.2	4 557	79.3	1 193	4.9
Northern Territory	64 005	68 850	4 845	7.6	6 195	127.9	-1 350	-2.0
Australian Capital Territory	4 282	6 160	1 878	43.9	1 321	70.3	557	9.0
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>517 043</b>	<b>669 881</b>	<b>152 838</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>120 594</b>	<b>78.9</b>	<b>32 244</b>	<b>4.8</b>

(a) Change explainable due to births minus deaths, changes to Census processing, overseas and interstate migration and changes to Post Enumeration Survey (PES) methodology.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## People for whom Indigenous status is unknown (Technical Note)

### TECHNICAL NOTE 2 PEOPLE FOR WHOM INDIGENOUS STATUS IS UNKNOWN

#### PEOPLE FOR WHOM INDIGENOUS STATUS IS UNKNOWN

**1** Despite the best efforts of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) to collect complete

information from all people in Australia on Census night, there will always be a group of people for whom Indigenous status is not known. While some people with an unknown Indigenous status will be Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people, and some will be non-Indigenous people, the exact proportions cannot be determined from the Census data. This complicates analysis of Census counts, given Indigenous status is not imputed within Census information, but is instead imputed later within the Post Enumeration Survey for use in producing population estimates. (Imputation is a statistical process for predicting values where no response was provided to a question and a response could not be derived.)

**2** The number of Census records with an unknown Indigenous status in the 2011 Census was 1,058,600 (5% of the total Census count) compared with 1,133,400 records (6% of the total Census count) in 2006. The difference of 74,800 records represents a 7% decrease in records with an unknown Indigenous status between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. This means that more people had a known Indigenous status in 2011 than in 2006, and this may account for some of the 'unmeasurable' increase in Census counts of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people between 2006 and 2011.

**3** The Northern Territory had the highest proportion of records with an unknown Indigenous status in 2011 (8%), followed by Western Australia (6%) and Queensland and New South Wales (both 5%). Between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses, the proportion of records with an unknown Indigenous status fell in all states and territories, with the largest reductions observed in New South Wales (down 1.0 percentage point), followed by Tasmania (down 0.9 percentage points) and Victoria (down 0.8 percentage points).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a), by proportion of state/territory(b)

	2006		2011		Change
	no.	%	no.	%	% points
New South Wales	391 274	6.0	342 923	5.0	-1.0
Victoria	266 028	5.4	246 893	4.6	-0.8
Queensland	224 909	5.8	224 206	5.2	-0.6
South Australia	69 318	4.6	62 934	3.9	-0.7
Western Australia	127 328	6.5	130 719	5.8	-0.7
Tasmania	22 903	4.8	19 380	3.9	-0.9
Northern Territory	16 505	8.6	17 391	8.2	-0.4
Australian Capital Territory	15 025	4.6	14 005	3.9	-0.7
<b>Australia(c)</b>	<b>1 133 446</b>	<b>5.7</b>	<b>1 058 586</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>-0.8</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Proportions are based on total population for each state/territory.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

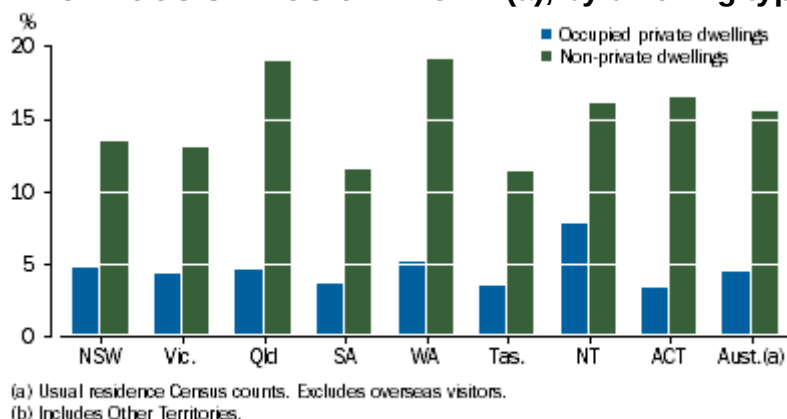
Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

**4** There are two broad situations which result in a person's Indigenous status being unknown:

- the returned Census form does not have a response to the Indigenous status question (known as item non-response), or
- when no Census form is received from a dwelling the number of males and females and other key demographic variables are imputed. Indigenous status is not imputed for these records, but is coded to 'not stated'.

**5** In non-private dwellings, a nominated person completes a summary Census form that lists all people staying there, and personal Census forms (which include the Indigenous status question) are distributed to each person on the summary form. If personal forms are not returned or not completed for all individuals listed on the summary form, the Indigenous status for these people is unknown. People in non-private dwellings accounted for 11% of people with an unknown Indigenous status in 2011. Nationally, people living in non-private dwellings were about three times more likely to have an unknown Indigenous status than people in private dwellings (16% compared with 5%). There was some variation by state and territory. For example, in the Australian Capital Territory, people living in non-private dwellings were about five times more likely to have an unknown Indigenous status than those living in private dwellings (17% compared with 3%) while in the Northern Territory people living in non-private dwellings were twice as likely to have an unknown Indigenous status than those living in private dwellings (16% compared with 8%).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a), by dwelling type



#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN DUE TO IMPUTATION OF PERSONS

**6** Imputation is a statistical process used to predict characteristics when individuals do not return a form, or no response is provided to a question and a response cannot be derived. Although Census records are imputed when the ABS does not obtain a Census form for residents of both private and non-private dwellings, most imputation occurs for non-response from residents in private dwellings. Key demographic variables (sex, age, place of usual residence and registered marital status) are imputed if no Census form is received.

**7** Indigenous status is coded to 'not stated' for imputed records. In 2011, almost three-quarters (73% or 768,600) of records with an unknown Indigenous status were imputed records. Unknown Indigenous status due to imputation was highest for the Northern Territory (85% or 14,700) and lowest for Tasmania (62% or 11,900).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a), Imputed records, 2011

	Imputed records		Total unknown
	no.	%	no.
New South Wales	248 084	72.3	342 923
Victoria	169 388	68.6	246 893
Queensland	168 735	75.3	224 206
South Australia	41 525	66.0	62 934
Western Australia	103 237	79.0	130 719
Tasmania	11 929	61.6	19 380



Northern Territory	14 695	84.5	17 391
Australian Capital Territory	10 883	77.7	14 005
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>768 561</b>	<b>72.6</b>	<b>1 058 586</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

**8** The proportion of imputed records nationally decreased slightly between the 2006 and 2011 Censuses (from 4.1% in 2006 to 3.6% in 2011). The Northern Territory had the highest rate of imputation in 2011 (7%), followed by Western Australia (5%), while Tasmania had the lowest (2%). Western Australia, Queensland, and the Northern Territory all recorded an increase in the number of imputed records over this period.

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a)(b), Imputed records by proportion of state/territory(c)

	2006		2011		Change % points
	no.	%	no.	%	
New South Wales	280 805	4.3	248 084	3.6	-0.7
Victoria	179 743	3.6	169 388	3.2	-0.4
Queensland	165 161	4.2	168 735	3.9	-0.3
South Australia	44 538	2.9	41 525	2.6	-0.3
Western Australia	97 737	5.0	103 237	4.6	-0.4
Tasmania	13 523	2.8	11 929	2.4	-0.4
Northern Territory	14 059	7.3	14 695	6.9	-0.4
Australian Capital Territory	11 399	3.5	10 883	3.0	-0.5
<b>Australia(d)</b>	<b>807 062</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>768 561</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>-0.5</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Excludes records where there was no response to the Indigenous status question.

(c) Proportions are based on the total population for each state/territory.

(d) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN DUE TO ITEM NON-RESPONSE

##### Geographic distribution

**9** In 2011, about one-quarter (290,000 or 27%) of records with an unknown Indigenous status were due to item non-response. Unknown Indigenous status due to item non-response was highest for Tasmania (38% or 7,400) and South Australia (34% or 21,400) and lowest for the Northern Territory (16% or 2,700).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a), Item non-response, 2011

	Item non-response		Total unknown no.
	no.	%	
New South Wales	94 837	27.7	342 923
Victoria	77 508	31.4	246 893

Queensland	55 468	24.7	224 206
South Australia	21 408	34.0	62 934
Western Australia	27 484	21.0	130 719
Tasmania	7 448	38.4	19 380
Northern Territory	2 696	15.5	17 391
Australian Capital Territory	3 120	22.3	14 005
<b>Australia(b)</b>	<b>290 022</b>	<b>27.4</b>	<b>1 058 586</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

**10** The national item non-response rate for the Indigenous status question decreased from 1.7% in 2006 to 1.4% in 2011. All states and territories saw a decline in the proportion of item non-response, with Tasmania recording the largest decline (from 2.0% of the population in 2006 to 1.5% in 2011), followed by New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia and Western Australia (each down 0.4 percentage points).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a)(b), Item non-response by proportion of state/territory(c)

	2006		2011		Change
	no.	%	no.	%	% points
New South Wales	110 469	1.8	94 837	1.4	-0.4
Victoria	86 285	1.8	77 508	1.4	-0.4
Queensland	59 748	1.6	55 468	1.3	-0.3
South Australia	24 780	1.7	21 408	1.3	-0.4
Western Australia	29 591	1.6	27 484	1.2	-0.4
Tasmania	9 380	2.0	7 448	1.5	-0.5
Northern Territory	2 446	1.4	2 696	1.3	-0.1
Australian Capital Territory	3 626	1.2	3 120	0.9	-0.3
<b>Australia(d)</b>	<b>326 384</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>290 022</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>-0.4</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Excludes imputed records.

(c) Proportions are based on total population for each state/territory.

(d) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondent - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## Age

**11** In the 2011 Census, the rate of item non-response to the Indigenous status question was highest for people aged 75 years and over (4%), followed by those aged 65-74 years and those aged less than 15 years (both 2%).

#### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a)(b), Item non-response by age, 2011

	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people	Non- Indigenous people	Total population	Item non-response	
Age group (years)	no.	no.	no.	no.	%

0-4	67 417	1 282 737	1 373 623	23 469	1.7
5-14	129 670	2 463 907	2 639 370	45 793	1.7
15-24	105 654	2 615 638	2 755 468	34 176	1.2
25-34	71 804	2 733 687	2 830 762	25 271	0.9
35-44	67 674	2 852 517	2 946 432	26 241	0.9
45-54	53 148	2 765 169	2 846 356	28 039	1.0
55-64	32 231	2 358 925	2 419 984	28 828	1.2
65-74	14 174	1 534 486	1 578 416	29 756	1.9
75 and over	6 598	1 293 698	1 348 748	48 452	3.6
<b>Australia(c)</b>	<b>548 370</b>	<b>19 900 764</b>	<b>20 739 159</b>	<b>290 022</b>	<b>1.4</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Excludes imputed records.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## Sex

**12** Nationally, the rate of item non-response to the Indigenous status question was slightly higher for females (51%) than males (49%) in 2011. A similar trend was seen in most jurisdictions. In the Northern Territory, item non-response was greater for males than in any other jurisdiction (57% compared with 48% to 51% for all other states and the Australian Capital Territory). However, this is because there were considerably more males than females with Indigenous status unknown (due to item non-response) in the Northern Territory.

### INDIGENOUS STATUS UNKNOWN(a)(b), Item non-response by sex, 2011

	Males		Females		Total no.
	no.	%	no.	%	
New South Wales	46 626	49.2	48 210	50.8	94 836
Victoria	38 194	49.3	39 310	50.7	77 504
Queensland	27 281	49.2	28 188	50.8	55 469
South Australia	10 279	48.0	11 130	52.0	21 409
Western Australia	13 714	49.9	13 771	50.1	27 485
Tasmania	3 682	49.4	3 766	50.6	7 448
Northern Territory	1 532	56.8	1 167	43.2	2 699
Australian Capital Territory	1 585	50.8	1 535	49.2	3 120
<b>Australia(c)</b>	<b>142 918</b>	<b>49.3</b>	<b>147 104</b>	<b>50.7</b>	<b>290 022</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors.

(b) Excludes imputed records.

(c) Includes Other Territories.

Note: Totals and components may not be consistent within and between tables due to introduced random error to protect confidentiality of Census respondents - see Census Dictionary, 2011 (cat. no. 2901.0).

## Census form type

**13** An Interviewer Household Form is used in discrete Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. Very few people who were enumerated using the Interviewer Household Form had an unknown Indigenous status. Of the 83,900 people whose response in the 2011 Census was collected using the Interviewer Household Form, 0.5% (450 records) had an unknown Indigenous status. This was lower than in 2006 (0.7%).

## Response to other Census questions

**14** Responses to other Census questions may indicate that a record with a non-response for the Indigenous status question is likely to be for an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person. In the 2011 Census there were 1,000 records with no response to the Indigenous status question, but with an Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander ancestry reported. The ABS does not edit these records to change Indigenous status during processing.

**15** Of those people for whom a response to the Indigenous status question was not reported, 14% (40,700 records) did not have a response to any questions about birthplace, ancestry, language spoken at home or religious affiliation.

## **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander fertility rates (Technical Note)**

### **TECHNICAL NOTE 3 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER FERTILITY RATES**

**1** There were 67,400 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years in the 2011 Census, which is the highest number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children of this age group ever counted in the Census. This represents an increase of 11,800 from the 2006 Census which counted 55,600 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children aged 0-4 years. Possible explanations for the increase include a higher fertility rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females during 2006-2011 than was observed during 2001-2006, and an increased propensity for parents to identify their children as being of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander origin in the 2011 Census than in the 2006 Census. For further information about changes in propensity to identify, refer to the chapter Changing Propensity to Identify as Being of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin between Censuses.

**2** While fertility levels for the period 2001-2011 can be estimated using birth registrations, it has been found that birth registrations routinely underestimate the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children. To determine whether there was a higher fertility rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females during 2006-2011 than was observed during 2001-2006, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) looked at fertility using two different methods.

**3** Fertility levels can be estimated from the 2006 and 2011 Censuses (with an overlapping period from 2001-2006) using the 'own-children' method (for information about the 'own-children' method, refer to paragraphs 24-28 in the Explanatory Notes). Using Census data and the 'own-children' method, the total fertility rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females was an average 2.5 babies per woman for the five years from 2001-2006, and an average 2.4 babies per woman for the period 2006-2011. Despite the accepted limitations of the 'own-children' method, it does show that the average levels of fertility estimated across the two time periods were broadly similar.

**4** It is also possible to examine the number of children ever born to females aged 15 years and over in the 2006 and 2011 Censuses. The number of children ever born to a particular woman is a measure of her lifetime fertility experience up to the point at which the Census was collected. Although it is not a good indicator of the current level of fertility, it is a reliable measure of completed fertility of women aged 45-49 years, as almost all women have had all of their children by the time they reach that age. Since young women are in the early stage of their reproductive life, it is much more informative to focus on changes in the older

age groups in which women have nearly or already had all of their children (that is, those aged 40-44 years and 45-49 years).

**5** Looking at the number of children ever born, there were no significant changes in the fertility levels for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women in the older age groups between 2006 and 2011, with the average number of children ever born increasing from 2.58 to 2.59 for women aged 40-44 years and declining from 2.66 to 2.63 for women aged 45-49 years.

#### **AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN EVER BORN, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females(a)**

	<b>2006</b>	<b>2011</b>
	Average no. per female	Average no. per female
<b>Age group (years)</b>		
15-19	0.14	0.11
20-24	0.78	0.71
25-29	1.59	1.49
30-34	2.17	2.16
35-39	2.49	2.49
40-44	2.58	2.59
45-49	2.66	2.63
<b>15-49 years</b>	<b>1.76</b>	<b>1.75</b>

(a) Usual residence Census counts. Excludes overseas visitors. Includes Other Territories.

**6** This analysis indicates there has been no significant change in the overall fertility levels of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander females between the periods 2001-2006 and 2006-2011. Any change in the fertility rates has been a very minor contributor to the large increase in the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children born after the 2006 Census and before the 2011 Census.